

HONG KONG (AP) — Princess Anne formally opened the consulate that will serve Britain when it comes to be Hong Kong's colony ruler in July. The princess, Queen Elizabeth II's daughter, highlighted the close ties between the two countries. Anne is likely to visit Hong Kong before she leaves Britain to marry Prince Charles, who is to marry her in the Chinese rule. The princess, who is a member of the royal family, will be the first British monarch to visit Hong Kong since it was handed over to China in 1997. She will be accompanied by Prince Charles, who is to marry her in the Chinese rule. The princess, who is a member of the royal family, will be the first British monarch to visit Hong Kong since it was handed over to China in 1997. She will be accompanied by Prince Charles, who is to marry her in the Chinese rule.

Seagal to accompany Dalai Lama on Taiwan visit

TAIPEI (AP) — Steven Seagal, Hollywood actor and star of the movie "The Expendables," will accompany the 14th Dalai Lama on his visit to Taiwan. The visit is part of a series of trips by the Dalai Lama to promote peace and understanding between different cultures and religions. Seagal, who is a Buddhist, will be traveling with the Dalai Lama to promote peace and understanding between different cultures and religions. The visit is part of a series of trips by the Dalai Lama to promote peace and understanding between different cultures and religions.

Skater gets away with licence

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Because of a legal loophole, a figure skater who was suspended for a year for a blood-alcohol test that was above the limit for drivers, was allowed to compete in the U.S. Figure Skating Championships. The skater, who is a professional, was allowed to compete in the U.S. Figure Skating Championships. The skater, who is a professional, was allowed to compete in the U.S. Figure Skating Championships.

Momies fight parking tickets

WICHITA, Kan. (AP) — A group of mummies, who are part of a religious group, are fighting parking tickets in a city. The mummies, who are part of a religious group, are fighting parking tickets in a city. The mummies, who are part of a religious group, are fighting parking tickets in a city.

Jordan seeking details of Croatia incident

AMMAN (J.T.) — Officials said Saturday they were trying to get full information on an incident on Friday where a Belgian corporal was shot to death Friday and a Jordanian soldier and U.N. official were wounded near U.N. headquarters in the last Serb-held area in Croatia. An unidentified suspect was arrested after the shooting in Vukovar, U.N. spokesman Philip Arnold told reporters in Zagreb. The injured, who were also unidentified, were taken to a hospital, he said. Further details were not given. The Belgian, whose name was not released, is the first member of the U.N. international force to be shot to death in Serb-held eastern Slavonia since January 1996, when the United Nations began supervising the peaceful restoration of Croatian rule there. Mr. Arnold quoted a commander of the 5,000-person force, Belgian Willie Hanset, as saying the shooting "has necessitated initiation of control measures. ... the situation is contained." Some 4,200 Belgian troops are part of the force.

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Baghdad denies moving troops towards Kuwait

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq on Saturday denied allegations that it was moving troops southwards and potentially threatening Kuwait. "There have been no unusual troop movements in southern Iraq," a military spokesman told the official Iraqi News Agency.

The official added that there have been no changes "in the normal lines used for training our forces throughout Iraq, especially in the south."

The statement was a response to Kuwaiti allegations on Friday that Iraq was reinforcing units in the south.

On Thursday, Iraqi dissident groups claimed that two brigades of Iraqi special forces, or 6,000 soldiers, were sent to the southern city of Basra. Opposition groups in London suggested they were positioned to try to counter anti-government rebel attacks in the area.

Basra is 500 kilometres south of Baghdad and about 50 kilometres from the Kuwaiti border.

Kuwait has been wary of Baghdad since Iraq invaded the emirate in 1990. Iraqi forces were driven out of the emirate by a U.S.-led coalition.

On Tuesday, a U.S. official said Iraqi forces have maintained a rapid pace of training over the past several weeks, presumably to educate new commanders put in place after a recent purge. The official, who spoke on condition of

anonymity, said the United States was carefully monitoring the situation.

Kuwait's Information Minister Sheikh Saud Nassir Al Sabah was quoted by Kuwaiti newspapers on Saturday as saying Iraq had between 150,000 to 180,000 troops deployed some 50 kilometres north of Kuwait.

"If they get instructions to move, it will not take them more than a few hours to reach us," said the minister whose country's some 20,000-man strong military is still in the process of rebuilding after the 1990-91 seven-month Iraqi occupation.

"Those who have surveillance systems, like satellites, can confirm it," the military official said, adding that "Kuwaiti allies, such as the United States and Britain, have not made such allegations."

"We also have reports that Iraqi President (Saddam Hussein) is boosting his regular army in the south, with units of the Republican Guard," he said, alluding to the country's elite fighting force.

Sandy Berger, President Bill Clinton's new national security adviser, said Tuesday there had been "no change in Iraq's military posture."

The White House also said on Wednesday that it did believe an Iraqi invasion was possible at the current time. Still, the comments did

not appear to be enough to placate Kuwaiti concerns.

"Saddam Hussein has rebuilt his forces destroyed by (U.S.-led) coalition forces during the Gulf war. He is in a position to threaten Kuwait," Sheikh Saud said.

"If Saddam Hussein decides to commit a suicidal act, which he would be doing, then nothing will stop him."

The official Iraqi newspaper Al Jumhuriya described the Kuwaiti allegations as "test balloons with the goal of creating fear by the Kuwaiti leaders ... leading them to loose control and commit more stupid acts against the Iraqi people."

The paper called on Kuwaiti leaders to "understand that they must work for their own interests and not get caught up in this new campaign," and should instead "correct the errors of the past."

A Kuwait newspaper, in rare criticism of the United States since the 1991 Gulf war, meanwhile criticised U.S. statements that Iraq toyed with ideas of invading Kuwait again.

Al Rai Al Aam said in a front-page editorial such remarks by Washington "reflect negatively on the stability of Kuwait and its economy."

According to the original no-fly, no-go zone enforced by Western allies in 1992, Iraq can have a total of 60,000 troops south of the 32nd Parallel.



VENICE CARNIVAL: People in masks parade through St. Mark's Square in Venice, Italy, as carnival kicks off on Saturday. Every year all over Italy carnival is celebrated till Feb. 11 (Reuters photo)

Crown Prince urges intellectuals to adopt objectivity, pragmatism while tackling national issues

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Saturday called on intellectuals to adopt objectivity as a fundamental guideline and be rational, cool and pragmatic while discussing issues of national interest.

The Crown Prince also emphasised that the initiative to build civic societies should come from the people themselves through comprehensive dialogue rather than people waiting for others to take the initiative for them.

"Future is what you make of it rather than believing that someone else designs it for you," said the Crown Prince.

The Crown Prince, addressing a gathering of Jordanian journalists, writers, artists, publishers and poets after an iftar he hosted for them, called for "participatory democracy where people play the major role in building civil societies."

"Globalism is on its way, but you have to be part of it by taking the initiative to reaffirm your identity and

culture rather than reacting to debates," said the Crown Prince.

Emphasising the need for pragmatism rather than emotions while dealing with national issues, the Crown Prince said: "We should exchange ideas with objectivity and cool heads. It is time to be mature and address each other in a civilised manner and with objectivity."

"Responsible freedom should not be confused with freedom from responsibility," said the Crown Prince in an implicit reference to personalised attacks, baseless assertions and spiced reporting appearing in the local media, particularly in weekly tabloids.

The Crown Prince reiterated Jordan's position that the problem of Palestinian refugees should be resolved on the basis of their right to return home or receive compensation in return as stipulated in United Nations resolutions. "I do not understand why people should cast doubt on Arab rights," said the Crown Prince, adding that every convention and

international law clearly protects the rights of the refugees. In this respect, he cited the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Non-Discrimination Convention of 1965, the Geneva conventions and several regional conventions.

"We need a better understanding of rights," said the Crown Prince. "We want a new humane world order."

The Crown Prince pointed out that while Israel is preparing for "final status negotiations with the Palestinians," we are not talking about the present but of the past, "the culture of rituals."

The Crown Prince also emphasised the importance of Arabs stepping forward to include cultural and religious rights and include them in the realm of human rights as part of an Arab renaissance movement.

"Why should we shy away from cultural interaction with others," said the Crown Prince, citing East Asia as a model with whom the Arabs could launch such interaction.

The Crown Prince also

Israeli pullback in Hebron could encourage Syria, Egypt asserts

DAVOS, Switzerland (R) — Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said on Saturday that Israeli withdrawal from remaining parts of Palestinian land was the key to better relations with Egypt and progress towards peace with Syria.

Speaking in the Swiss resort of Davos on the eve of the first meeting between the Egyptian and Israeli leaders for more than six months, Mr. Musa said a bad atmosphere in relations stemmed from the initial policies and practices adopted after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took power last June.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak met Mr. Netanyahu in July but later accused him of reneging on agreements. He refused to meet him again until Israel reached an agreement with the Palestinians on Hebron.

"The bad atmosphere was not personal," Mr. Musa told Reuters in an interview. "We had reservations about certain policies and practices but we see in the Hebron agreement (signed last month) and in particular the timeframe for further withdrawals a positive sign that would help change the atmosphere."

"Now we have to pursue actively the rest of the steps of the Palestinian-Israeli track, first of which is to withdraw or redeploy from the villages and the rest of the land of the Palestinians — this will be the key to change," he added.

Mr. Musa said Syria, which has had no direct talks with the present Israeli government, had good reason to be suspicious of Israel's commitment to anything it signed.

"But if the Hebron agreement and the annexed one on the next steps are implemented, then the Syrians and Lebanese will

see that Israel is respecting what it has signed.

"So the signing of the Hebron agreement, coupled with implementation, would certainly encourage the Syrians and Lebanese or at least show there is a positive point in getting a deal with the government of Israel," he added.

Syria itself continues to insist that only an Israeli commitment to withdraw from all the Golan Heights will bring it back to the negotiating table.

Mr. Mubarak and Mr. Netanyahu will meet in Davos on Sunday but Mr. Musa said a tripartite meeting including Palestinian President Yasser Arafat was not yet a certainty.

"But if the circumstances allow and the time allows the issue will be the peace process and what next," Mr. Musa said.

The minister, in Davos for the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, said the Egyptian government wanted to tell the international business community that it was ready for integration into the global economy.

"Egypt is open for business, ready to link up with the international economy according to the accepted rules. We are very optimistic about the future and we consider ourselves part and parcel of the international market," he said.

The World Economic Forum organised the third Middle East and North Africa economic conference in Cairo in November and the meeting helped stimulate unprecedented interest in Egypt as a destination for foreign investment.

Foreign funds have been pouring into the Egyptian stock exchange and fixed-income markets and in direct investments.

Jordan involved in effort to end Sudan crisis, Kabariti says

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Saturday briefed the Arab and International Affairs Committee of Parliament on the latest developments in the region and Jordan's stand towards them.

Mr. Kabariti stressed Jordan's support for Sudan in defending its territorial integrity and said the Kingdom rejects any foreign interference in Sudan's internal affairs.

"Jordan is currently holding intensive diplomatic contacts aimed at helping Sudan to overcome this crisis and has been in touch with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in a bid to back its mediation efforts aimed at ending disputes between the Sudanese government and the country's opposition groups," said Mr. Kabariti.

He said that Jordanian and Sudanese officials will exchange visits in the course of coordinating diplomatic efforts "to deal with the crisis and to foil Ugandan, Eritrean and Ethiopian goals in Sudan."

"(Former) Sudanese Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi asked to visit Jordan but we have not replied to his demand. We are seeking coordination with the Sudanese government for his visit. We will do our utmost to secure the unity and sovereignty of Sudan," he said.

On Iraq, Mr. Kabariti noted that there was an early agreement between

the governments of Jordan and Iraq to supply Jordan with its needs from Iraqi oil at low prices in accordance to a special protocol.

"The Iraqi government wanted to revise the protocol to be in line with the new oil prices. Therefore Iraq raised its oil prices from \$15.23 per barrel to \$19.10," said the prime minister.

He said that the new price of oil means an additional burden of \$70 million on the Treasury.

However, he said, there is no plan to raise fuel prices.

Mr. Kabariti briefed the committee on Jordan's efforts to lift the sanctions imposed on Iraq since its invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqis.

On the Lebanese and Syrian arenas, Mr. Kabariti said the government had sent a memorandum to the Lebanese on the release of three Iraqi diplomats who had confessed the killing of Jordanian Taleb Souheil in Beirut and that another memo was sent on the detention of Jordanian Darrar Karmi working at a Beirut hotel. He said that the Lebanese government replied saying it considered the memos an interference in their internal affairs. Mr. Karmi was released last week.

The prime minister said that Syria was angered by the Hebron agreement and

(Continued on page 3)

Sudan sends mixed signals on UAE bid

KHARTOUM (Agencies) — Sudan on Saturday sent mixed signals after an offer from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to mediate in the fighting in the east of the country.

The rebels, who took control of territory in the east of Blue Nile state in an offensive that started on Jan. 12, said it wanted international backing before agreeing to any deals.

Sudanese Minister for Cabinet Affairs Salahuddin Mohammed Ahmad Karar appeared to welcome Thursday's mediation offer telling the independent Akhbar Al Yom daily that the UAE would send an envoy to Sudan shortly to begin the mediation process.

But government spokesman and Information Minister Brigadier Al Tayeb Ibrahim Mohammed Khair rejected talks as untimely saying that Sudan's top priority was to reclaim territory captured by the rebels in the Blue Nile region.

"Dialogue is considered by the Sudanese government as a matter of principle, strategy and policy, but now the top priority is given for the liberation of the occupied territories," he said.

And Mr. Karar said his government would agree to a ceasefire only if the rebels could prove they were not being supported by Ethiopia.

Khartoum has accused Ethiopia and Eritrea of supporting the Sudanese opposition and deploying troops on Sudan's territory.

Gen. Khair also said Saturday that Uganda had massed troops along the southern border and was

preparing for an all-out offensive that could include the use of chemical weapons.

He accused the United States and Israel of backing Uganda and added that both countries, as well as Britain, were training Ugandan troops.

"The British in particular are training personnel on the 122-mm guns," Gen. Khair said, adding that no reconciliation was possible "under military pressure."

UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan made the mediation offer in a telephone conversation with Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir on Thursday.

Sudanese opposition groups reacted by saying they will only accept a peace accord on condition that there are international guarantees it will be respected, a spokesman said Saturday.

The Khartoum government had no credibility, said Omar Nour Al Dayem, the spokesman for the National Democratic Alliance, which groups the main opposition factions.

"We will only accept negotiating with this regime if we have guarantees that any agreement would be respected," he said from the opposition base in Asmara, reached by telephone from the Egyptian capital.

The opposition spokesman in Asmara meanwhile confirmed that the opposition would meet there on Feb. 15 to decide whether to accept the mediation offer.

"We have given our agreement in principle. We

(Continued on page 3)



'2000 YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY': Catholic Sister Mariene Saleh shows clothes of nuns from the 19th century displayed at the "2000 Years of Christianity" exhibition at the Holy Hearts College in Beirut's northern suburb of Bauchi. The fair includes a large collection of ancient headresses and tiaras once worn by clergymen from all Christian sects (Reuters photo)

Cyprus protests Turkish warships' visit to breakaway northern port

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Cyprus has protested to the United Nations over a recent visit by three Turkish warships to the Turkish-held part of the island.

In a letter to Secretary-General Kofi Annan circulated on Friday, the charge d'affaires of the Cyprus U.N. mission, James Droushiotis, referred to the docking at Famagusta on Jan. 25 for five days of the frigate Fauh and the gunboats Dogan and Gurbet.

"On behalf of my government I wish to protest strongly these illegal actions, which are in violation of the principles and provisions of the charter of the United Nations and preemptory norms of international law as well as United Nations resolutions, including binding decisions of the Security Council," he said.

Mr. Droushiotis added that the Cyprus government declared the ports of Famagusta, Karavostasi and Kyrenia closed to all vessels "following the Turkish invasion of 1974." This was a reference to Turkish troops who took over the north of the island after a coup in Nicosia engineered by the military junta then ruling Greece.

Mr. Droushiotis said the visit by Turkish warships was "the latest of a series of continuing provocative acts by Turkey against Cyprus, manifested by threats of the use of force against the republic of Cyprus in statements made by key officials of the Turkish government."

He was alluding to warnings by Turkey that it would prevent the deployment of S-300 anti-aircraft missiles which the Greek Cypriot-led government in Nicosia recently announced it was purchasing from Russia.

"These threats were most recently incorporated in the so-called 'joint declaration' of Jan. 20, 1997 between President (Suleyman) Demirel of Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. (Rauf) Denktash," Mr. Droushiotis said.

He also sent a separate letter to the secretary-general strongly protesting the joint declaration, which, he said, violated Security Council resolutions deploring and condemning the breakaway Turkish Cypriot state headed by Mr. Denktash that was

established in 1983 but is recognised only by Turkey.

He said the "threats contained in the joint declaration" amounted to a direct threat to use force, in violation of the U.N. Charter.

"The republic of Cyprus is a sovereign state and a member of the United Nations and it has the inalienable right to defend itself and the freedom to decide on its armaments," the letter said.

In Davos, Switzerland, Cypriot President Glafcos Clerides offered on Friday to cancel the controversial plan to buy Russian anti-aircraft missiles if Ankara agreed a deal on the future of the island.

"Of course, we don't want to waste the money," he said in answer to a question at a news conference.

Mr. Clerides, who was attending the World Economic Forum, said that the missiles would in any case not be deployed for at least 18 months.

The veteran leader urged the international community to bring greater pressure to bear on Turkey to reach agreement on the island where the two communities have been partitioned for over 20 years.

The European Union should make it clear to Ankara that its hopes for eventually joining the economic bloc were dependent on resolving the problem of Cyprus.

"(A solution) requires a concerted action by the United States, the Europeans, to convince Turkey that if it continues to occupy that part of Cyprus...you cannot be accepted (into the European Union)," Mr. Clerides said.

They have to "pass a clear message to Turkey that you have to solve the Cyprus problem," he said.

The Cyprus government has proposed a federalist state in which both communities would have a high degree of autonomy.

U.N. special representative for Cyprus Han Sung-Joo of South Korea is in Cyprus on a week-long visit aimed at preparing the ground for a face-to-face meeting between Mr. Clerides and Mr. Denktash.

But Mr. Clerides said that he did not know when the meeting would take place.

Baz: Sudan is Iran's 'Trojan horse'

PARIS (R) — A top Egyptian official has accused Iran of using Sudan as a "Trojan horse" to infiltrate Africa but said Tehran "cannot prevent the fall of the Sudanese regime."

Osama Al Baz, President Hosni Mubarak's senior political adviser, made the comments in an interview broadcast on Friday by Radio France International.

Mr. Baz last year accused Tehran's Islamic rulers and Sudan of being behind an attempt to assassinate Mr. Mubarak during a visit to Ethiopia.

The Egyptian leader survived the attack. "Iran is using Sudan as a Trojan horse through which it is trying to infiltrate neighbouring countries," Mr. Baz said.

"For example, the Sudanese regime is opening embassies in West African countries, which are proven to be a front behind which Iranian intelligence aims to promote Iranian and Shi'ite influence. It is a dangerous matter," he added.

He said Cairo would press Khartoum to change its foreign policy and "stop interference in the internal affairs of its neighbours, stop being a threat to its neighbours and notably to Egypt's security."

"We believe that no foreign element, neither Iran nor any other country, can prevent the fall of the Sudanese regime or keep it in power, or help the opposition or prevent it from coming to power," Mr. Baz said.

Franco-Israeli relations back on track — Levy

PARIS (R) — Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy said after meeting French President Jacques Chirac on Friday that ties between the two countries, strained during Mr. Chirac's recent visit to the Middle East, had now mended.

"My meeting with the president underlines our mutual decision to reinforce our links and to demonstrate this to all those who thought our relations would not again be what they were (before the chill)," Mr. Levy said.

"I believe our relations will be much stronger in the future... our meeting was not only satisfactory but it contained much promise for the future," Mr. Levy told reporters.

Foreign Minister Herve De Charette, who met Mr. Levy separately, said he wanted more Franco-Israeli cooperation in all areas this year and that he would visit Israel in the next few weeks. Defence Minister Charles Millon will visit in February.

The pledges of friendship were aimed at ending a chill of several months marked by a public confrontation between Mr. Chirac and Israeli security men in occupied Jerusalem in October which dramatised differences over the terms for peace, the role of Europe and the city's status.

Referring to a meeting in Damascus on Wednesday between European envoy Miguel Angel Moratinos and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, Mr. Levy told reporters:

"I have been informed that Syria was interested in the statements I made recently on the need to restart negotiations and on the formula which would allow this."

Questioned on reports that Syria would only negotiate with Israel after ascertaining its position on two U.N. Security Council resolutions which call for exchanging land for peace, Mr. Levy said: "We must speak face-to-face but we will not accept a dictate."

"We have to find common ground between our two positions."

Mr. Levy added that Israel still adhered to its principles and said the October 1991 Middle East Madrid conference had been based on the same two resolutions.

Peace talks with Syria were suspended by Israel's previous government after a wave of attacks 11 months ago.

Syria demands Israel resume the talks from the point at which they stopped, insisting the previous Israeli government had approved the principle of full withdrawal from the Golan Heights, seized by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war.

But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu opposes the land-for-peace formula which has been the basis for five years of negotiations.

Mr. Chirac's spokeswoman Catherine Colonna quoted him as stressing that Mr. Levy was the first senior figure from the region he had met since the Hebron accords signing earlier this month.

"Chirac said after the meeting that he was happy to note the Israeli government's determination to go forward and continue the peace process," Ms. Colonna said.

Mr. Levy plans to address a public rally on Sunday in Paris hosted by French Jewish associations before flying home.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Nicaragua plans to open embassy in Israel

MANAGUA (R) — Nicaragua plans to open its first-ever embassy in Israel as part of the foreign policy of new President Arnoldo Aleman, a government official said on Friday. "In a desire to strengthen its ties with the nation of Israel, the government of Nicaragua is proceeding with the steps necessary to open an embassy in that country," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Claudia Paniagua told Reuters. The proposed embassy follows the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between the countries in 1992 under former Nicaraguan President Violeta Chamorro. Ms. Paniagua said the government had not yet decided where it will locate the embassy in Israel or when it will open. Under the left-wing Sandinista government, which ruled Nicaragua from 1979-1990 with Soviet and Cuban backing, relations between the countries were poor, as Nicaragua favoured Israel's hostile neighbours, such as Libya. Mr. Aleman, a right-wing lawyer and coffee grower, took office on Jan. 10.

Indonesia to deploy 24 jets for pilgrims

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia will set aside 24 jets to take 195,615 Muslims making the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, the Jakarta Post newspaper said on Saturday. The president of Garuda, Soepandi, was quoted as saying the national carrier would lease 19 jets from foreign airlines in addition to using its own aircraft for the Hajj and start flights next month. Devout about 80 per cent of Indonesia's 200 million people are Muslims, making it the world's most populous Islamic country. Every year there are logistical problems in moving pilgrims from across the vast archipelago to five gateway airports for the 10-hour flight to Saudi Arabia.

Turkey says it kills 40 more rebels

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (R) — Government forces have killed 40 Kurdish guerrillas in eastern Turkey, bringing the rebel death toll for clashes in the last two days to 79, security officials said on Friday. The emergency rule governor's office said in a statement that the latest Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) casualties occurred in fighting in the last two days in the provinces of Elazig and Bingol. It did not give any figure for military casualties and no independent confirmation of the death toll was available. Security officials said on Thursday that 39 rebels had died in the provinces of Batman, Sinak and Bingol. More than 20,000 people have died in the conflict between Turkish troops and the PKK, fighting for autonomy or independence in the mainly Kurdish southeast.

Ship runs aground off Saudi coast

DUBAI (R) — A cargo ship carrying 34,000 tonnes of bulk barley ran aground off the coast of Dammam in eastern Saudi Arabia, the daily Saudi Gazette reported on Saturday. The ship was about 200 kilometres from the King Abdul Aziz seaport in Dammam, the paper said, adding the vessel would be refloated after some of its cargo had been unloaded. It did not say how the ship ran aground or when the incident had occurred.

President vows Turkey will remain secular

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkish President Suleyman Demirel has said that Turkey would retain its secular status which had made it "the most developed Muslim country," Anatolia news agency reported.

"Turkey as a secular state which affairs of state and those of religion are kept separate and where minds are free... have no fear, Turkey will stay that way," Mr. Demirel said in a speech to high school pupils.

Mr. Demirel said he was the "custodian of the secular republic," and added that Turkey owed its current level of development to the secular and democratic system founded in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. "Nobody can deny this," he said.

"The Turkish republic is the only secular state among

55 Muslim countries. It is also the one which has seen the most development during this century," he said.

Mr. Demirel's statement came as the ruling Islamic party has been multiplying initiatives seen as running counter to the country's secular traditions.

Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's Welfare Party has drawn up a bill to allow girls to wear the Islamic headscarf in government offices and in universities. The move has prompted strong criticism from the secularists.

The same party has also sought to withdraw from the official Turkish Aviation Institute (THK) its monopoly over the lucrative collection of hides from sheep sacrificed in the traditional 'Eid Al Adha feast which falls this year in mid-April.

The party on Friday insist-

ed it would go ahead with the building of new mosques in Ankara and Istanbul and allowing civil servants to wear Islamic headscarves despite opposition from secularists.

"Of course mosques will be built in Taksim (in Istanbul) and Cankaya (in Ankara)," the state-run Anatolian news agency quoted senior Welfare member Oguzhan Asilturk as saying.

Mr. Erbakan has mostly steered clear of introducing Islamic norms into public life since his Welfare Party gained power in a coalition with the conservative True Path Party last June.

But in the fasting month of Ramadan, Welfare has put forward pledges for mosques in Istanbul and Ankara, introduced shorter workdays for fasting civil servants and promised to allow female

civil servants to wear headscarves.

Mr. Asilturk said the party would fulfil the people's expectations step by step.

"It is not possible to understand the prohibitive mentality of those who say they are modern, while many women cover themselves in France," he said, in response to a question about the ban on wearing headscarves.

The Turkish republic was founded as a strictly secular state by Kemal Ataturk from the crumbling Islam-based Ottoman empire. Turkey's secularists, most notably the powerful army, are wary of any move they see as a return to Ottoman values.

Government spokesman Abdullah Gul said the cabinet did not discuss any of the disputed issues in its meeting on Friday.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 73111-10

PROGRAMME TWO

13:30 Cartoon
14:00 French Programmes
14:30 Comedy — The Famous Five
15:00 Feature Film — "Young Gotti"
16:30 Call For Prayer And Iftar
17:30 You Bet Your Life
18:00 Magazine — Fast Pas Revue
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Magazine — Sports Et Musique
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air
20:00 Oriental Rugs
20:30 Science Fiction — Baby-kn 5
21:10 Tycoons (Documentary)
22:00 News In English
22:25 Islam in a Changing World
23:00 Hot Shots
23:50 Mini-Series — "Blue Grass"
01:15 Ramadan Talks

PRAYER TIMES

05:06 Fajr
06:25 Sunrise Dhuhr
11:49 Dhuhr
14:48 Asr
17:13 Maghreb
18:33 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation

Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622666
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church
Tel. 827126
Evangelical Lutheran Church
Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel.
654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel.
675691.

The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190.

USEFUL
TELEPHONE
NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Mohammad Shugair652693
Dr. Nidal Al Assa'd751673
Dr. Issam Al Asmar890504
Dr. Osama Al Hussein847389
Firas pharmacy661912
Ferdows pharmacy778336
Al Asema pharmacy637055
Naioukh pharmacy623672
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy637660
Najib pharmacy847632

IBRID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Baker552206
Al Quds pharmacy1—
ZARQA:
Dr. Nabil Al Safarini901333
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to rise slightly with skies sunny to partly cloudy. A cold air mass will affect the Kingdom in the evening causing temperatures to drop significantly and skies becoming cloudy. Rainfall is expected in the northern regions extending gradually to all other regions. Winds will be southwesterly active. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds

northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min/Max. temp.1/10
Aqaba05/16
Deserts3/13
Jordan Valley05/15

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 9, Aqaba 16 Humidity
readings: Amman 60 per cent,
Aqaba 43 per cent.

USEFUL
TELEPHONE
NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Mohammad Shugair652693
Dr. Nidal Al Assa'd751673
Dr. Issam Al Asmar890504
Dr. Osama Al Hussein847389
Firas pharmacy661912
Ferdows pharmacy778336
Al Asema pharmacy637055
Naioukh pharmacy623672
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy637660
Najib pharmacy847632

IBRID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Baker552206
Al Quds pharmacy1—
ZARQA:
Dr. Nabil Al Safarini901333
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to rise slightly with skies sunny to partly cloudy. A cold air mass will affect the Kingdom in the evening causing temperatures to drop significantly and skies becoming cloudy. Rainfall is expected in the northern regions extending gradually to all other regions. Winds will be southwesterly active. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds

northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min/Max. temp.1/10
Aqaba05/16
Deserts3/13
Jordan Valley05/15

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 9, Aqaba 16 Humidity
readings: Amman 60 per cent,
Aqaba 43 per cent.

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JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre637111
Civil Defence Department661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue
Amman630341
Civil Defence Emergency
Rescue Unit199
Rescue Police192 621111 637777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Dept.630321
Hotel Complaints605800
Price Complaints661176
Water & Sewage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints
.....787111
Telephone Information (directory
assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone
Repairs623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs661101
Jordan Television773111
Radio Jordan774111
Water Authority6800100
J. Electricity Authority815615
Electric Power Co.636381
RJ Flight Information08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

PALESTINE, Shmeisani607071
Shmeisani Hospital669131
University Hospital845845
Al-Muasher Hospital6672279
The Islamic, Abdali66612637
Al-Ahli, Abdali6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen77101/3
Al-Bashir77511/26
Army, Marka89161/15
Queen Alia Hospital602340/50
Amal Hospital674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and
Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital
(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital
(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital
(09)990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital
(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital
(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital
(02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital
(03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT

This information is supplied by
Royal Jordanian (RJ) information
department at the Queen Alia

International Airport Tel.
(08)53200-5, where it should
always be verified. Information on
other flights can be supplied on
phone 08 (52700)

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:15 Bombay (RJ)
08:35 Jeddah (RJ)
08:50 Larnaca (RJ)
09:15 Doha, Riyadh (RJ)
09:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:20 Beirut (RJ)
16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:05 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
17:45 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
17:45 London (RJ)
18:10 Athens (RJ)
19:30 Tunis (RJ)
19:40 Rome (RJ)
20:10 Frankfurt (RJ)
20:55 Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)
22:15 Jakarta, Abu Dhabi (add)
(RJ)
00:10 Cairo (RJ)
02:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
05:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights
06:20 Tel Aviv (LY)
12:40 Bahrain (GF)
15:20 Moscow (SU)
20:10 Beirut (ME)
20:30 Cairo (MS)
23:10 Istanbul (TK)
23:50 London, Beirut (BA)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:45 Beirut (RJ)
10:15 Frankfurt (RJ)
10:30 Aqaba, Vienna (RJ)
11:00 Tunis (RJ)
11:15 Rome, Vienna (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:15 Athens (RJ)
12:20 Abu Dhabi, Jakarta (add)
(RJ)
20:10 Cairo (RJ)
20:30 New Delhi (RJ)
20:40 Damascus (RJ)
21:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
21:40 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
22:10 Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)
22:45 Bangkok (RJ)
23:45 Sanaa (RJ)
Jeddah (add) (RJ)

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12:40 Bahrain (GF)
15:20 Moscow (SU)
20:10 Beirut (ME)
20:30 Cairo (MS)
23:10 Istanbul (TK)
23:50 London, Beirut (BA)

01:25 Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
Royal Wings (RW) Flights
09:20 Aqaba (RW)
18:55 Tel Aviv (RW)

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06:45 Beirut (RJ)
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(RJ)
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DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

to open embassy in Israel

Nicaragua plans to open its first embassy in Israel. A government official said on Friday that the move is part of the nation's policy to strengthen its ties with the Jewish state. The official said the move follows the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1985. The official said the move is part of the nation's policy to strengthen its ties with the Jewish state. The official said the move follows the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1985.

employ 24 jets for pilgrims

Indonesia will send 24 jets to the Hajj for the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. The move is part of the nation's policy to strengthen its ties with the Islamic world. The official said the move follows the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1985.

kills 40 more rebels

Turkey (R) - Government forces have killed 40 more rebels in the last two days in the north-east of the country. The move is part of the nation's policy to strengthen its ties with the Islamic world. The official said the move follows the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1985.

round off Saudi coast

A cargo ship carrying 1,000 tons of goods has been rounded off the coast of Saudi Arabia. The move is part of the nation's policy to strengthen its ties with the Islamic world. The official said the move follows the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1985.

remain secular

Secularism remains a key principle in the new constitution. The move is part of the nation's policy to strengthen its ties with the Islamic world. The official said the move follows the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1985.

1995-96

1996-97

1997-98

1998-99

1999-00

2000-01

2001-02

2002-03

2003-04

2004-05

2005-06

2006-07

2007-08

2008-09

2009-10

2010-11

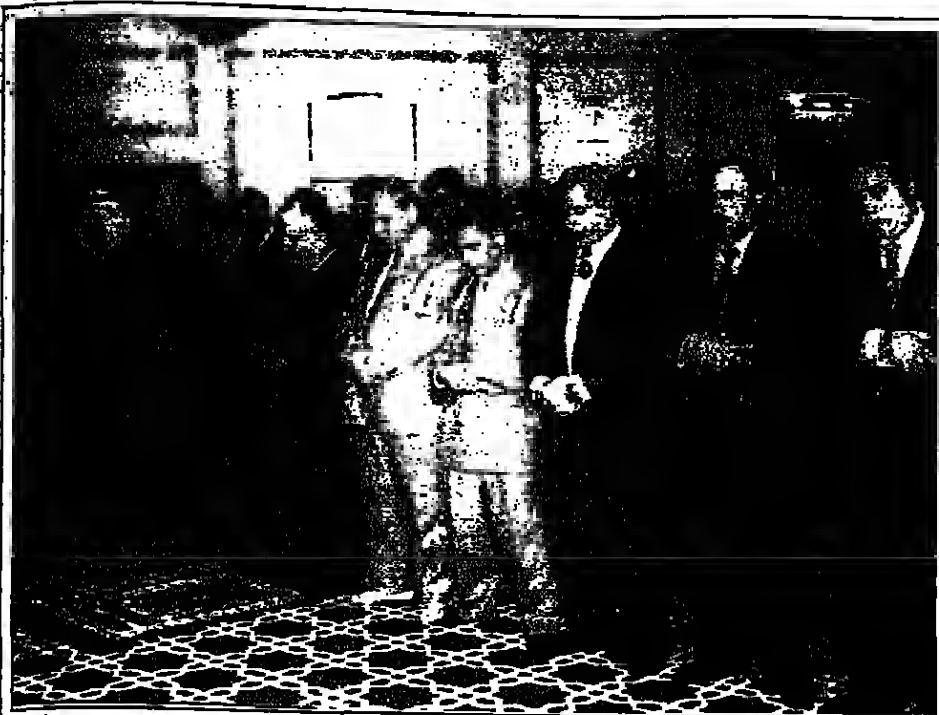
2011-12

2012-13

2013-14

2014-15

Home News



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Saturday joins worshippers in performing Al Maghreb prayers before an iftar banquet that he hosted for journalists, writers, artists, musicians and intellectuals (see story page 1) (Petra photo)

Minister to pay visit to Algeria

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb is to pay an official visit to Algeria later this month to conclude a free trade agreement and sign a health cooperation accord. The accord was initially approved by the two countries last month. Mr. Abul Ragheb and Secretary General of the Ministry of Industry and Trade Mohammad Snaidi Saturday met with Algerian Ambassador to Jordan Hamid Chbeira to review economic and trade links. During the visit to Algiers, slated to start the third week of February, Mr. Abul Ragheb will be accompanied by an official delegation. Last November, Minister of Health Aref Bataineh paid a week-long visit to Algeria to discuss bilateral cooperation in health affairs. At that time, Dr. Bataineh signed two protocols with the Algerian government. The first provides for the treatment of Algerian patients in the Kingdom's public and private hospitals, especially patients requiring heart surgery and those with kidney and blood diseases. The second protocol called for bilateral teams to design a mechanism for implementing the agreement. According to the agreement, Algerian physicians are to receive training in the Kingdom and Jordanian medical specialists would be sent to Algeria to perform surgeries as part of the training. The second protocol stipulated that the two sides would exchange manufacturing expertise in industry, personnel training and carry out joint marketing of pharmaceuticals produced by both countries.

Public institutions to close during Eid Al Fitr

AMMAN (Petra) — Government departments and public institutions will close as of Saturday Feb. 8 and reopen on Wednesday Feb. 12 to observe the Eid Al Fitr feast, according to an official communiqué issued by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Saturday. Eid Al Fitr marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan. Also Saturday, Minister of Education Munther Masri announced that schools will close on Feb. 8 and re-open Saturday Feb. 15, 1997. The minister released a memorandum to departments of education and schools which stated that he took this decision as Wednesday Feb. 12 falls at the end of Eid Al Fitr Holiday and just previous to the scholastic weekend. However, the minister confirmed that schools are obligated to remain open Feb. 20 to compensate the holiday. He maintained that this arrangement will benefit teachers whose jobs are distant from their permanent residences. Eid Al Fitr is expected to commence Saturday Feb. 8, 1997 or the following day.

NEWS IN BRIEF

JBA representative meets with World Bank delegate

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputy President of the Jordan Businessmen's Association Fakhri Bilbeisi met with the World Bank delegation currently on a visit to the Kingdom. He briefed the delegation regarding cooperation between public and private sectors to alleviate unemployment and poverty.

Minister meets with Egyptian ambassador

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Administrative Development Kamal Nasser Saturday received Egyptian Ambassador to Jordan Hani Riyad and the two reviewed bilateral relations with emphasis on matters pertaining to administrative development.

Traffic department celebrates graduation

AMMAN (Petra) — The Department of Traffic Saturday celebrated the graduation of some of its police staff. Department Head Colonel Fakhri Iskandar addressed the graduates and informed them that such courses aim at exposing the staff to traffic expertise and training.

What's Going On

PLAY

"A Night of Fantasy" (Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

Plastic art by Egyptian artist Mubammad Abdul Rahim at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Feb. 6.

Ramadan exhibition from Wadi Dana Nature Reserve (silver nature jewelry, dried fruits) and Jordan River Designs (JRD) ornaments (tablecloths, candles, embroidered accessories) at JRD showroom, Jabal Amman, First Circle (Tel. 613081), until Feb. 10.

Exhibition on the "Institute of the Arab World in Paris" at the French Cultural Centre, until Feb. 6.

Works by contemporary Arab artists entitled "The New Collection" at Darat Al Amana, Jabal Weibdeh, (Tel. 643251/2), until Feb. 27.

Water authority issues appeal for cooperation

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Water Authority (JWA) Saturday issued a public appeal for full cooperation with teams attempting to collect needed information to establish a data base regarding homes, companies and other properties connected to the national water and sewage systems. JWA's Director Kamal Zou'bi stated that subscribers are requested to provide JWA teams with documents demonstrating the official registration of the premises, the JWA subscription number, the manner in which they are using their water supply and their full addresses. This information is key to starting a data base and providing full information about subscribers' locations so that water supplies as well as water bills can reach them regularly and without delay, he said.

He added that wrong or incomplete information could inconvenience the JWA and subscribers. Accurate information is also required from farmers and people in the rural regions who are supplied with water through the JWA system. Mr. Zou'bi stated that 25 JWA teams are in the field collecting information and that the JWA initiated this field work due to public complaints for such problems as faulty water metres, delay in receiving bills or being charged twice for the same time period. Water bills are normally sent out once every three months and, according to Mr. Zou'bi, faulty readings by JWA employees were among the subscribers' complaints. The project is being conducted with German technical assistance, he said, and computerisation was deemed necessary as many files containing subscriptions and other information, deposited at municipalities which had earlier handled water supply procedures, were either lost or damaged. Mr. Zou'bi added that the JWA teams will take a brief pause in their work during the four-day Eid Al Fitr holiday and resume thereafter. The JWA teams have heretofore covered 11 districts of Amman.

Department warns of frost formation

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Department of Meteorology Saturday forecast rain for Sunday and Monday as a result of a low depression centred over the north-east of Cyprus.

A department official predicted rain for Sunday night in the northern regions and extending Monday to the rest of the country with a consequent drop in temperature.

He said that temperatures will drop to one degree below zero to one degree at night in the next two days and rise to a maximum of nine degrees Celsius during the day.

He warned against frost formation in the early hours, especially in the hilly and badia districts.

Crown Prince urges intellectuals to adopt objectivity

(Continued from page 1)

implicitly rejected off-beat Arab fears that cultural interaction would allow foreign ideas and concepts to corrupt the Arab society. The Crown Prince stated that the Arab culture was strong enough to withstand any such penetration and instead it could impart its own value systems and traditions to other cultures.

Similarly, he said, it is a wrong concept to see the Muslim World different from the West or any other part of the world on the basis of religion. He pointed out that millions of Muslims also live in the West and other parts of the world, and, as such, there is no basis for a dividing line in perceptions of the two. The Crown Prince renewed his call for setting up a national data bank that include every significant element of the history of modern Jordan "from the Jordanian perspective" rather than letting others cast the Kingdom in their own mould.

In this context, he said addressing the gathering of more than 500 people as "intellectuals," the Jordanian publishing industry as well as media and writers have a major role to play. He lamented the sad state of affairs in the Arab publishing industry, pointing out that on average every 700 Arabs have one new book every year — a figure that could not be compared with any other part of the world.

The Crown Prince called for an inter-sectoral approach to utilising resources and addressing national needs, particularly in sectors like water and energy. Such an approach, he explained, will result in optimum utilisation of resources in a cost-effective manner. The Crown Prince invited the audience to express their views on the subjects he raised and a dialogue followed.

Heard during the dialogue were complaints that the state-run Jordan Television was not doing enough to highlight the Jordanian history and perspectives. The complaints were countered by writers and producers from the television itself who recounted the many programmes and serials they have produced and are working on.

The February meeting was due to be attended by John Garang, leader of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army, former Sudanese Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi and all Sudanese opposition groups, he added.

Mr. Dayem said the situation on the ground, where the rebels have opened a number of fronts to try to thwart a government counter-offensive, remained unchanged.

"The NDA (rebels) is still 30 kilometres southeast of Roseires," the dam in Blue Nile province which supplies electricity to the capital. He claimed that a thousand troops from the government volunteer militia had defected to the rebel side. The Sudanese government has arrested dozens of opponents suspected of planning a campaign of sabotage and assassinations in the capital, a Sudanese leader said Saturday.

He stressed Jordan's keenness on safeguarding the dignity and the rights of all Jordanian citizens wherever they might be. "We will not allow any infringement on citizens' rights in any way," he said.

Mr. Kabariti revealed that he had received a message Saturday from the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) notifying Jordan that Red Cross officials are regularly paying visits to Jordanian detainees in Kuwait prisons and continually requesting the Kuwaiti government to improve their conditions.

Mr. Kabariti voiced appreciation of the Kuwait foreign minister's attempt towards reestablishing normal relations between his country and the other Arab countries, transcending the adverse effects of the Gulf war.

He described Jordanian-Saudi ties as excellent, stressing that Jordan wants to restore Arab unity and solidarity to better serve Arabs.

Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Sa'd Hayel Srour and head of the committee Fawzi Tueimeh thanked the prime minister for his openness and frankness in discussing and reviewing the latest events on the internal and regional levels.

The prime minister answered questions of the committee's deputies and said that democracy means participation by people

Senate endorses one-man, one-vote draft law on elections

By Maria Bizri
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Senate Wednesday endorsed the one-person, one-vote draft law on elections.

The controversial law, which replaces the bloc-voting formula with the one-person, one-vote system, had drawn bitter criticism from the opposition as being unconstitutional and aimed at weakening its presence in Parliament.

Opposition deputies had said that the draft law discriminated between Jordanians, was tailor-made to reduce opposition strength in the Lower House and weakened national unity and tribal cohesion.

Following last week's heated debate in Parliament in which the law was approved by 51 votes for, 21 against and four abstentions, the Senate destroyed opposition hopes after a unanimous vote to pass the law. Despite the strong stand of dissenting deputies, the House vote on the draft law was as expected, reflecting the government's majority support in the legislature.

The draft legislation now requires His Majesty King Hussein's approval before it is enacted.

The Senate also ratified the 1994 Artists Union Draft Law with a near unanimous vote.

The law merges the Jordanian Artists Association and the Jordanian Musicians Association into one entity, the Artists Union, and mandates that all artists, including actors, directors, performers, singers and composers, register with the union in order to practise their respective professions.

Initial reactions to the law in the Senate drew negative responses from three Upper House members on the Judiciary Committee, namely Kamal Sha'er, Nazir Rasheed and Jawdat Shoul, on the grounds that artists should not require registration to perform.

The draft law contains 53 articles and was approved during yesterday's session

presided over by Senate Speaker Ahmad Lawzi and attended by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti.

The Senate also ratified a 1995 draft law governing audio-visual censorship. The draft law contains 20 articles and has been approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Also Saturday, the Upper House forwarded the 1996 draft labour law, the 1996 Royal Association for Development and Charitable Work draft law, the 1996 State Security Court draft law and the 1994 Regular Court draft law to its Judiciary Committee for investigation. The Senate forwarded the Balka Applied University draft law to its Education Committee for recommendations.

The Upper House approved Senator Jawdat Shoul's request for a transfer from the Administrative Committee to the Financial Committee.

Ministry finalising arrangements for 'cultural season' in Paris

(Continued from page 1)

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Tourism is finalising arrangements for the "Jordanian Cultural Season" in Paris next month and has prepared informational campaigns to guarantee its success. Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Saleh Irsheidat stated Saturday.

Addressing a meeting of the Higher Committee for the Jordanian Cultural Season, Dr. Irsheidat described himself as optimistic that the event will have long-term positive effect on the tourism industry.

The ministry is planning to display 110 paintings by contemporary Jordanian artists, along with posters, and leaflets.

The accompanying informational campaign will depict Jordanian tourist and archaeological sites and highlight the treasures of the Kingdom, the minister stated.

He explained that articles and advertisements aimed at promoting Jordan will also be published in French newspapers.

The event will open March 11 and last until October and is organised in conjunction with French cultural organisations, Dr. Irsheidat stated, adding that subsequent to Paris, the exhibition will proceed to Rome.

During yesterday's meeting, the higher committee reviewed the progress of the various subcommittees. The minister voiced appreciation of the contributions made by national economic institutions, which are partially financing the information campaign scheduled to precede the opening of the Jordanian Cultural Season.

According to Dr. Irsheidat, the event will comprise an exhibition of traditional crafts and artefacts excavated by French archaeological teams in Jordan.

In a recent Reuters interview, Dr. Irsheidat maintained that the government aims to boost tourism during 1997 by over 15 per cent from last year's 1.10 million visitors.

He affirmed that his ministry will delegate advertising and marketing to the private sector.

Last year, Jordan forecast a tourist boom as figures for the first five months showed a 17 per cent increase in visitors. However, Israeli raids on Lebanon, violence in southern Jordan discouraged tourism and the final statistics for 1996 demonstrated an increase of only 2.8 per cent over 1995.

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Addressing a meeting of the Higher Committee for the Jordanian Cultural Season, Dr. Irsheidat described himself as optimistic that the event will have long-term positive effect on the tourism industry.

The ministry is planning to display 110 paintings by contemporary Jordanian artists, along with posters, and leaflets.

The accompanying informational campaign will depict Jordanian tourist and archaeological sites and highlight the treasures of the Kingdom, the minister stated.

He explained that articles and advertisements aimed at promoting Jordan will also be published in French newspapers.

The event will open March 11 and last until October and is organised in conjunction with French cultural organisations, Dr. Irsheidat stated, adding that subsequent to Paris, the exhibition will proceed to Rome.

During yesterday's meeting, the higher committee reviewed the progress of the various subcommittees. The minister voiced appreciation of the contributions made by national economic institutions, which are partially financing the information campaign scheduled to precede the opening of the Jordanian Cultural Season.

According to Dr. Irsheidat, the event will comprise an exhibition of traditional crafts and artefacts excavated by French archaeological teams in Jordan.

In a recent Reuters interview, Dr. Irsheidat maintained that the government aims to boost tourism during 1997 by over 15 per cent from last year's 1.10 million visitors.

He affirmed that his ministry will delegate advertising and marketing to the private sector.

Last year, Jordan forecast a tourist boom as figures for the first five months showed a 17 per cent increase in visitors. However, Israeli raids on Lebanon, violence in southern Jordan discouraged tourism and the final statistics for 1996 demonstrated an increase of only 2.8 per cent over 1995.

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Zairean aircraft carry out bombing raid on rebels

GOMA, Zaire (Agencies) — Three Zairean government aircraft Saturday bombed the centre of the Nya-Nya in northeastern Zaire, a rebel spokesman said.

The spokesman Raphael Ghenda told AFP the three planes from the Zairean army or government allies, carried out the raid between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. (1100 and 1400 GMT) and destroyed eight houses. He said he did not know whether there had been any civilian casualties.

But he added that the attack "had no effect on our forces."

"We strongly condemn these barbaric acts and we consider that they are war crimes," Mr. Ghenda added.

The Zairean army is using helicopters and small fighter-bombers, based at Kisangani, some 500 kilometres west of Goma, to attack Tutsi-dominated rebel forces who have gained control of a large swathe of eastern Zaire.

The rebel spokesman did not have information on other frontlines.

On Friday, Zairean rebels claimed they had captured the strategic town of Waisa, 500 kilometres north of Goma, as a Zairean government counter-offensive appeared to be faltering.

Rebel leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila also said rebel forces, who have set up their own administration in North and South Kivu provinces bordering Rwanda, were 30 kilometres from Kalemie, southeast of Goma.

No independent source has confirmed the fall of Waisa, but commentators stressed that the rebel leader's declarations had previously been reliable.

Zairean Vice Prime Minister and Transport and Communication Minister Lambert Mende Omalanga said Saturday that Zaire would not ask "anyone's permission to defend itself."

Referring to calls by the international community to begin talks, Mr. Mende underlined the determination of the Zairean authorities "to use military means to end the aggression to which the eastern part of the country is victim."

"It is not Zaire which is making war, it is Zaire which is defending itself," he said.

Mr. Mende was speaking after talks with Burundian Ambassador to Zaire Alphonse Barasira, who reiterated that Burundi had no involvement in the war, despite repeated allegations from Zaire that its neighbours are supporting rebels.

Meanwhile, EU Humanitarian Commissioner Emma Bonino arrived in Zaire to meet officials and visit the eastern city of Kisangani to assess the humanitarian crisis involving tens of thousands of people displaced by fighting in eastern Zaire.

Ben Ryan, a European Union spokesman, said Ms. Bonino was Saturday to meet first with Zaire's Prime Minister Kengo Wa Dondo and other officials in Kinshasa then travel to Kisangani to visit displaced persons' camps.

She will return to Europe via Kinshasa Sunday afternoon.

Fighting between rebels and troops in eastern Zaire is making an already dire situation for refugees and displaced people impossible and could force aid agencies to leave, a senior U.N. aid official said Friday.

Martin Griffiths, U.N. humanitarian coordinator for the Great Lakes region, said he feared large numbers of refugees and displaced Zaireans would be dispersed again and a high number would die.

"I still think it's anybody's guess which way it (the fighting) is likely to go. The only reason that is of interest to us is to have access to the internally displaced, the Zairean population in the area and the refugees," he told Reuters.

"The already very difficult problems of logistics we had when we started providing assistance in late November have been hugely complicated over the last couple of weeks," he added.

"Access is likely to become steadily more difficult and the result is that all these three groups are not going to receive the assistance they need," he added in an interview in Nairobi.

"In this terrain, this (fighting) is making an already dire situation impossible."

"I think it is not at all unlikely that we will have to pull back from immediate access. We hope of course we won't have to pull out of the area altogether but this is something we have to bear in mind and have a contingency for," Mr. Griffiths added.

"The consequences could be a dispersal of those people... and it is for that reason we will stay in that area operating right up to the day we are obliged to leave," he said.



This file picture shows Zairean Tutsi rebel soldiers standing guard in a Bukavu street on Nov. 21, 1996. The rebels said a Zairean counteroffensive in the northern sector had been "nipped in the bud" and denied allegations that Ugandans and Rwandans were fighting with the rebel forces (AFP photo)

Opposition sets priorities for post-Milosevic Serbia

BELGRADE (Agencies) — A Serbian opposition leader offered Saturday a first glimpse of his movement's political and economic agenda if it ousts President Slobodan Milosevic in elections due late this year.

In an interview with the newspaper, *Demokratija*, Zoran Djindjic outlined a three-pronged approach focusing on the dismal state of the economy, democratic reforms and a solution to the problem of Kosovo, an impoverished and restive southern province with an overwhelmingly ethnic Albanian majority.

Mr. Djindjic is one of three leaders of the opposition coalition known as Together, which has staged nearly 11 straight weeks of street protests against the autocratic rule of President Slobodan Milosevic.

The rallies were touched off when the government annulled opposition wins in local elections in November, but they reflect the broader angst of a people who live under Eastern Europe's last Communist-style regime and earn an average of \$150 a month.

On the economy, Mr. Djindjic went into little specific detail other than to acknowledge it is a basket case. He did not say, for instance, whether he would open Serbia up fully to foreign capital.

He said that if his people came to power, they would ask international institutions like the European Union for a "special status" as the country struggles to overcome the legacy of decades of command economy and nearly five years of punishing economic sanctions over Serbia's role in the Bosnian war.

But even economic progress, he said, must wait until democratic reforms are instituted.

"Democratisation first, and then we solve specific problems," said the 44-year-old former philosophy professor.

Mr. Djindjic has a somewhat dubious record as he champions democracy and human rights. He backed militant Bosnian Serbs for most of the war but has since distanced himself from the separatist ideal, a manoeuvre critics have dismissed as opportunist now that Mr. Milosevic is facing the strongest challenge yet to his 10-year rule.

On Kosovo, a flashpoint which some say could lead the Balkans into another war, Mr. Djindjic said the province's drive for independence must be settled "within the framework of the constitution, which calls for autonomy for Kosovo."

Mr. Milosevic stripped the province of that status in 1989 on grounds that it was preparing to secede from the rest of Serbia.

Mr. Djindjic added: "We are prepared to respect the constitution and define through a democratic and tolerant political process what degree of autonomy would not threaten the state and grant real rights to those who are supposed to enjoy this autonomy."

Serbian presidential and parliamentary elections are due to be held by the end of this year.

Serbia's opposition believes time is running out for Mr. Milosevic amid signs that state authority is weakening in the face of marathon street protests.

"They say Milosevic's tactic is to keep buying time — but every day we persevere is a defeat for him and a victory for us — time is on our side," Mr. Djindjic told tens of thousands of cheering pro-democracy demonstrators.

If police tactics were any guide, the authorities certainly seemed confused in handling Friday night's marches — the 76th straight day of student and three-party coalition protests.

Witnesses said about 1,000 anti-riot police adopted a bewildering series of blocking positions to an effort to channel fearful, noisy dissidents towards their goal, a central square.

At one point police directed the demonstrators to walk on non-existent pavements. In another, they blocked a pedestrian walkway and told marchers to stick to the street itself.

If anything, the sight of police bussed back and forth — only to give up corridors — only increased the sense of their goal of forcing the authorities to reinstate opposition victories in local elections last November.

One marcher said to a police officer: "The guy who told you to do this must be very clever."

"He's a real genius," the policeman said with a smile.

Support for the opposition came from an unexpected direction when former Yugoslav Federal president and one-time Milosevic associate Borisovic Jovic told Britain's *Guardian* newspaper that the policy of ignoring election results had divided and weakened the Socialist government.

Three hundred members of the Belgrade Bar Association rallied Friday to demand the resignation of the justice and interior ministers for their role in frustrating opposition efforts to have the election results reinstated.

Teachers are already on strike, about 1,000 schools have shut and deans at Belgrade University have turned their backs on the pro-Milosevic rector.

"Let him (Milosevic) sunbathe in Corfu and write his memoirs, but leave us alone," said Mr. Djindjic. "He cannot realise that the longer he stalls, the more painful the end will be for him."

In Rome, the international community's high representative for Bosnia, Carl Bildt, said Serbia was becoming the "sick man of Europe" with no way out of desperate economic straits unless Mr. Milosevic honoured the opposition's election wins.

New body approves Hong Kong law changes

BEIJING (AFP) — A China-appointed body has agreed to scrap or amend a series of controversial Hong Kong laws, delegates at the meeting said Saturday, in a move which pro-democracy groups in the territory have denounced as eroding human rights.

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The chairman of Hong Kong's Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood, Frederick Fung, was the only member to vote against the law change motion, according to Hong Kong radio RTHK, arguing it was wrong to amend the Bill of Rights and the public order and societies ordinances.

Mr. Fung Friday handed a letter of protest to Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen over the issue.

Among those abstaining from the vote at the end of the committee's two-day meeting here, according to RTHK, was the chairman of Hong Kong's Liberal Party, Allen Lee.

After the vote, Mr. Tung assured reporters that the meeting in Beijing was losing its promised autonomy. What happens to after July 1 "is up to Hong Kong," Mr. Tung said, adding that the system of "one country, two systems" would be observed after the handover.

"Hong Kong people will have a high degree of autonomy. We are the master in our house," he said.

"Western society in Hong Kong is very politicised. I don't think it's good for Hong Kong. I think we have Chinese traditional values. These values have their weaknesses, too. We should combine the two," he said.

He criticised Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten, who Thursday said if the preparatory committee supported the proposed changes it could do "enormous and irrevocable" damage to the territory.

"It's totally not true and not right. He is wrong," Mr. Tung said.

The legal changes were proposed by a Chinese legal sub-group and, among other things, amend Hong Kong's bill of rights and impose strict controls on the freedoms of association and assembly.

U.S. President Bill Clinton has joined the chorus of disapproval.

Earlier, a Hong Kong rural community leader walked out of the meeting in protest against its decision to retain a law giving women equal rights to inheritance in Hong Kong's new territories.

His protest was the strongest yet seen among members of the committee.

Bulgarian protesters frolic, Socialists squirm

SOFIA (R) — Bulgaria's embattled ruling Socialists, rocked by daily anti-government protests and torn by internal divisions, will struggle this weekend to form a new cabinet to deal with a deepening economic crisis.

Students and opposition political parties vowed to press on with a month-long campaign to force the Socialists, formerly the Communists, to call a general election two years early.

Thousands of demonstrators marched through central Sofia for a 26th day on Friday, blowing whistles, chanting "victory" and delighting in mocking the beleaguered Socialists.

Pop singers belted out tunes while thousands of protesters bobbed and weaved in front of Alexander Nevski Cathedral. Black-robed Orthodox priests clapped to the music on the front steps.

Strikes and rallies were held around the Balkan state, which has seen its economy collapse in recent months. The main road and rail links to Greece and Turkey were cut for a third day.

Students, teachers, nurses, miners, transport and oil refinery workers staged stoppages or colourful protests during the day. Miners appeared wearing helmets with lights switched on in central Sofia.

Students danced through the streets blocking traffic at key intersections for 30 minutes and then moving on. Many students donned firemen hats and burned stacks of now worthless leva in front of a money exchange.

The Socialists, floundering in the face of broad popular opposition, offered to give up efforts to form a government on Friday but quickly retreated to smoke-filled rooms to continue haggling over who would serve in a new cabinet.

Interior Minister Nikolai Dobrev, who received a mandate to form a government earlier this week, told Reuters he now would accept a coalition cabinet formed by President Petar Stoyanov.

"I don't mind if it is formed under the leadership of the president," he said. "I am ready to return my mandate if such a government is formed."

But he then postponed meeting Mr. Stoyanov, apparently under pressure from hardliners in his party. He said later he had to give Socialist leader Georgi Parvanov time for more talks with other political parties.

The Socialists, elected for a four-year term in 1994, have overseen a caretaker cabinet since December when Zhelyu Zhelev resigned as prime minister.

Mr. Dobrev has until Tuesday to form his cabinet and have it accepted by the 240-seat parliament but his task looks difficult.

The Socialists have an absolute majority in parliament but it is also clear that they have little popular support to carry out vital economic reform.

Mr. Stoyanov returned Friday from talks with European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) leaders in Brussels.

He told Western leaders Bulgaria might default on its \$10 billion foreign debt and he was told in turn that there was no hope of help for Sofia unless it resolved its political crisis.

He also called again for Mr. Dobrev to give up his mandate and accept a brief coalition government to pass emergency economic measures before elections. "The decent exit is really for Mr. Dobrev to give up this mandate," Mr. Stoyanov told reporters.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), which has been holding up a \$115 million standby credit, wrote to Mr. Stoyanov saying it was ready to help as soon as a valid government was in place.

IMF managing director Michel Camdessus urged Mr. Stoyanov to impress on political parties the high Social cost of delay.

Many economists have told Bulgarians that they are just beginning to feel the effects of their economic crisis, with inflation expected to hit a month-on-month rate of 50 per cent in January and the lev falling in value by the hour.

White House backs Irish parades commission

WASHINGTON (R) — The White House Friday praised Britain for agreeing to establish a commission to try to defuse tension sparked by the annual parade season in Northern Ireland and hoped it would be operating soon.

"The establishment of an independent parades commission is an important and valuable recommendation," said White House spokesman Mike McCurry. "We're pleased that the British government is moving to set that type of commission up."

He added that it was hoped the commission would be operating in time for the marching season this summer to avoid some of the violence that broke out last summer.

Two people were killed during violence last year which began with a march by pro-British loyalists through a Catholic area in Drumree, 40 kilometres south of Belfast.

The British government's announcement of a commission Thursday followed publication of a report commissioned by the government from a three-man team, headed by leading academic Peter North, on how to deal with controversial parades and prevent them from serving off sectarian clashes.

The report said a five-member "parades commission," rather than the police, should act as mediators and eventually decide whether marches near Catholic areas should go ahead.

But Northern Ireland Minister Patrick Mayhew said the government needed more time to decide if the commission, should have legal powers to decide whether disputed parades should go ahead. He came under fire from the opposition Labour Party for failing to act immediately.

Mr. McCurry said the report offered "valuable insights and recommendations to deal with the very controversial and divisive questions that the marching season raises to northern Ireland."

"It's vital for the future progress of the Northern Ireland peace process that new ways be found to bring these communities together and to deepen and nurture a process that holds out so much hope to the people of Northern Ireland," Mr. McCurry said.

Bloody Sunday galvanised Catholics into militant action against Britain and pro-British unionists from the 60 per cent Protestant majority in Northern Ireland.

It also helped swell the recruiting ranks of the IRA and has become a rallying call for Irish nationalists in the British province.

A 1972 British investigation accepted the version of British paratroopers that they had come under fire while confronting a Catholic demonstration and returned it.

The inquiry, by Chief Justice Lord Widgery, exonerated the British soldiers. But Catholics denied that the British troops had come under fire from any quarter and insist that the dead — 14th died months later — were shot down in cold blood.

A book by writer Don Mullen suggests that there may have been at least one sniper on the walls of Londonderry because gunshot wounds on the dead were at an angle of 45 degrees.

He says this is supported by British army radio traffic intercepted by an amateur radio enthusiast. The Widgery investigation only took evidence from soldiers on the ground.

Mr. Major told parliament this week that Britain would reopen the book on one of the darkest passages in Northern Ireland's history if it was presented with new evidence.

Ireland to collate 'new' bloody Sunday evidence

LONDON (R) — The Irish government is to confront Britain with new evidence to secure a fresh probe into the "bloody Sunday" killings of 13 Catholic demonstrators 25 years ago, Irish officials said Friday.

The officials, contacted in Dublin by telephone, said government departments would collate new testimony by an author, a law professor and others and present it to the British government in a bid to get a fresh investigation.

They said bloody Sunday, which took place on the streets of Londonderry 25 years ago on Jan. 30, was one of the topics discussed when Irish Prime Minister John Bruton telephoned his British counterpart, John Major, Friday.

The two leaders also reviewed faltering Northern Ireland peace talks and prospects for a new ceasefire by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) guerrilla organisation in its war against British rule of the province.

The officials said the new evidence would be given to Britain at a regular Anglo-Irish ministerial meeting, the next of which is expected to take place early this week.

The Irish move was made public as Catholics in northern Ireland's second city and elsewhere prepared to mark the 25th anniversary with rallies and prayer and demands that Britain publicly apologise for the killing of unarmed demonstrators.

A march is planned from the Catholic bogside area of Londonderry Sunday to be followed by speeches, one of

Bosnian Muslim general says more war if refugees cannot go home

SARAJEVO (AFP) — A senior Bosnian Muslim general gave a blunt warning to his former Serb enemies that they faced more fighting unless they let refugees return home, a Sarajevo newspaper reported Saturday.

General Sead Delic, commander of the Muslim-led Bosnian army's Second Corps, visited the disputed northern town of Brcko to give his warning, said the daily newspaper *Oslobodjenje*.

"This war is not finished as long as the people do not return to their homes," the paper quoted him as saying.

The report comes a day after Croat civilians outside the southern town of Stolac stopped a U.N.-supervised convoy of Muslim refugees from returning to their homes in the town.

And it follows attacks by Serbs on Muslims when they tried to return to their former homes in the Serb-held northeastern village of Gajevi last weekend.

Despite promises by both Serbs and Croats at the signing of the Dayton peace accords in November 1995 to let tens of thousands of Muslim refugees return to the homes they fled in the war, the U.N. says only a few hundred have been allowed to do so.

International arbitrators are due to announce on Feb. 15 a decision on competing claims for Brcko between the Serbs and the Muslims.

The Muslims had a pre-war majority of the town's population and are demanding that the refugees be allowed home.

Bosnia's Serbs say the town is strategically vital because it sits in a narrow corridor that is the only link between the eastern and western parts of Serb-held Bosnia.

General Delic, whose 2nd Corps fought for the Brcko area during the 43-month Bosnian war, said he was prepared to do battle again.

"This is not a threat," he said. "If there are no other means then this is the only way to achieve what we fought for over four years."



Pakistan's former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is seen in a crowd of supporters during a campaign event in Lahore, Pakistan, on Nov. 5, 1996.

Pakistani campaign

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The preparatory committee, charged with overseeing Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty on July 1, approved the package of changes with one vote against and 10 abstentions, they said, adding 135 members had attended the meeting.

Fourteen Hong Kong laws were to be abolished and 11 modified because they were "against the basic law," the mini-constitution for post-handover Hong Kong, Xu Ze, the director of the Bureau of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs, told reporters.

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"Western society in Hong Kong is very politicised. I don't think it's good for Hong Kong. I think we have Chinese traditional values. These values have their weaknesses, too. We should combine the two," he said.

He criticised Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten, who Thursday said if the preparatory committee supported the proposed changes it could do "enormous and irrevocable" damage to the territory.

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U.S. President Bill Clinton has joined the chorus of disapproval.

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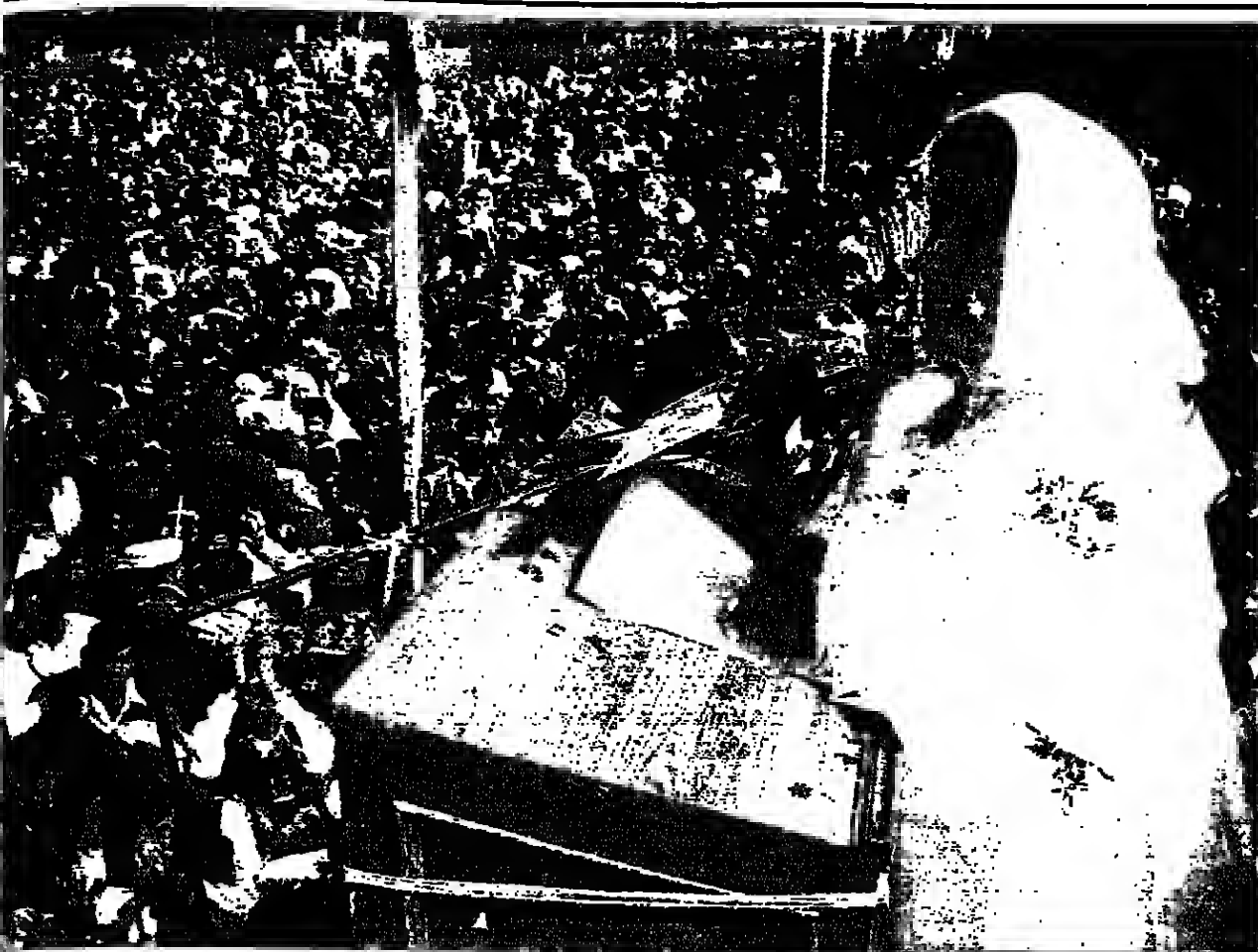
Forty-five Hong Kong laws were to be abolished and 11 modified because they were "against the basic law," the mini-constitution for post-handover Hong Kong. Xu Ze, director of the Bureau of Hong Kong and Macao Affairs, told reporters.

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It was also decided that Hong Kong's social guarantees — the free press, the judicial system and district courts — would be set up on July 1 with 25 per cent of the membership to be appointed by Mr. Xu.

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Pakistan's former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto addresses an election rally in Khanewal. Ms. Bhutto, nudged by President Farooq Leghari on Nov. 5, 1996 is leading her Pakistan People's Party campaign for national and provincial assembly elections set for Feb. 3 (Reuters photo)

Pakistani campaign ends with voters weary of corruption

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Pakistan's election campaign came to an end Sunday without overcoming the disenchantment of voters weary of politicians who are often corrupt and inefficient, analysts said.

The campaign was again dominated by the two juggernauts of Pakistan's political scene — the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) of Benazir Bhutto and the Pakistan Muslim League of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif — which have battled for power since the restoration of parliamentary democracy in 1985.

The elections will go ahead Monday after Ms. Bhutto lost a last-ditch court appeal to overturn her dismissal in November by President Farooq Leghari. Allegations of corruption and misuse of power were cited in the court decision.

Mr. Bhutto's dismissal was a major factor, one Pakistani analyst said. Nevertheless, the analyst predicted Mr. Khan and his movement would be a factor in the future.

"His campaign has had a strong impact and his standing will continue to grow," he said. On the other hand, the ascension of Ghinva Bhutto — widow of Benazir Bhutto's estranged brother Murtaza — could be a temporary development, another analyst said.

"This phenomenon created by the emotions raised by the death of Murtaza and helped by parties opposed to the PPP to divide the electorate will have a hard time surviving," said the analyst, who predicted a set-



Leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party-Shahid Bhutto (PPP-SB), Ghinva Bhutto acknowledges the crowd by making a clenched fist, the symbol of her party, at a packed rally in a central Lahore park. Ghinva, the Lahore-born widow of Benazir Bhutto's murdered brother Murtaza, is challenging Benazir's mother for a national assembly seat in the up-coming Feb. 3 elections (Reuters photo)

ting of scores in the Bhutto family. Ghinva Bhutto, whose husband was killed by police last September, took over the dissident faction of the PPP once headed by Murtaza Bhutto. The killing led to the jailing of Benazir Bhutto's husband, Asif Ali Zardari, on conspiracy charges.

The election campaign has been carried out in relative calm. One death has been reported, compared with more than a dozen in previous campaigns. But the campaign has been characterised by mudslinging, notably around the "Sita White Affair," after the English aristocrat who claimed at the beginning of the campaign that Imran

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Khan was the father of her child. In addition to explaining the affair, Mr. Khan has also been accused in Muslim Pakistan of using "Jewish money" because of his marriage to Gemma Goldsmith, daughter of a Jewish Franco-British billionaire.

Voters have approached the election with indifference, as it wasn't clear until the last week of the campaign that it would even be held.

The Supreme Court waited until Wednesday to turn down Ms. Bhutto's appeal for reinstatement of the parliament and provincial assemblies — as well as reinstatement herself as prime minister.

Ms. Bhutto wound up her election campaign Saturday with a bitter attack on President Leghari. "He has brought not one corruption charge against me," Ms. Bhutto told a packed crowd in Lahore, capital of Punjab, Pakistan's most populous and influential province.

"This is the man I made president because he wasn't strong enough to make himself chief minister of Punjab," she said. "This is a man whose father couldn't even win a National Assembly seat and the man I made president as a reward for his hard work after he couldn't become Punjab chief minister, a man I was sure would never betray me," she said.

"Look what he's done," she said at her main rally in Lahore on the last day of campaigning. Ms. Bhutto said the dismissal of her government on Nov. 5 was part of a plot to drive her and her Pakistan People's Party from politics and charged again that Mr. Leghari was putting together a "king's party" to perpetuate his power.

Islamic organisation claims killing of Algerian union leader

ALGIERS (Agencies) — The Islamic Front of the Armed Jihad (FIDA) Saturday claimed responsibility for the assassination of the leader of Algeria's main trade union Abdoulhak Benhamouda.

"FIDA announces its responsibility in the attack directed against the person of Benhamouda, a man who put himself at the service of the junta," the organisation said in a communique signed by Ahmed Abou El Fida published in the dailies, Le Matin, El Watan and Liberte here.

The communique also threatened to continue the struggle against the government and its allies. Its authenticity could not immediately be established.

Benhamouda, the head of the General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA), was buried Thursday in Algiers as a service attended by Algerian President Liamine Zerroual.

A close supporter of Mr. Zerroual and a sworn enemy of Islamic fundamentalists, Benhamouda was shot dead by five suspected Islamic militants as he left union headquarters in May 1

Square in central Algiers Tuesday. FIDA, which has several academics in its ranks, specialises in the assassinations of political figures and intellectuals. Several of its leaders have fled to Europe.

In recent months, it has been hard hit by the security forces. In May last year, it lost its leader, Mohammed Brahimi, who was killed along with a dozen companions to their hideout in Hydra, a chic district of Algiers.

Meanwhile, suspected Muslim fundamentalists killed eight people, including a baby, in the latest night attack on an isolated community outside Algiers, Algerian security forces said Friday.

The reported killings capped another week of bloodshed during which the union leader and a retired general were killed.

They coincided with warnings from Algeria's most ruthless rebel movement, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), of more attacks soon on Algerian figures.

Nearly 200 people have been killed in Algeria since the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan started on Jan. 10, with some Algerian newspapers putting the figure at more than 250.

In their statement Friday, security officials said on the night of Wednesday-Thursday eight people in the farming community of Sidi Kaddour were "assassinated in a cowardly way" — the term they normally use for killings in which the victims have their throats cut.

"This barbarous act did not exclude a baby of 13 months who was strangled by the criminals," said the statement, carried on the official Algerian News Agency (APS). Algerian officials use the term "criminals" to describe Muslim rebels.

Shortly after his funeral of Benhamouda Thursday, killers struck in the western Algerian city of Oran, killing a retired general who had been a powerful figure under two previous presidents.

The site of the killing of the eight villagers lies in Sidi Moussa district, whose provincial capital of Blida is some 50 kilometres south of Algiers.

Blida city is headquarters of the Algiers military district and a stronghold of Muslim fundamentalists who have been trying for five years to topple the authorities.

The massacre followed a series of attacks in which car-bombs and other explosives have blasted Algeria's cities, while axes, knives and guns have left a trail of blood in rural communities.

Algerians residents said Friday the GIA had pasted fresh warnings in the past few days to walls in a working class suburb that is an Islamist stronghold.

"The warnings are in tracts pasted on walls in Hussein Dey," a resident said by telephone. "They are signed by the GIA and apparently were put up just a few days ago. They are threatening soon to attack all Algerian personalities, journalists, film-makers and senior executives."

About 60 media employees have been killed since mid-1993. Journalists work under laws limiting what they can report on security issues and are accused by Islamists of supporting the government.

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Hutus target Rwanda genocide witnesses — U.N.

GENEVA (R) — Hutu death squads in Rwanda are killing Tutsi survivors of genocide and witnesses who are forced to move out of isolated areas near army positions and towns in search of security, a new United Nations report said Friday.

The report by the U.N. Human Rights Office said survivors were being banded down in their homes, intimidated, threatened and poisoned to death in some cases in remote areas bordering Zaire in the tiny Central African country.

More than half a million minority Tutsis and Hutu moderates died in 1994's Hutu-led ethnic slaughter, after which Tutsis swept to power in Rwanda and the perpetrators fled to neighbouring countries.

The U.N. report said at least 227 genocide survivors were killed in 1996 when attacks against them rose sharply and urged Rwanda to take measures to protect them.

In total, the U.N. Human Rights Office in Rwanda received reports of nearly 1,600 killings in 1996, the report said. It gave no breakdown for killings by the Tutsi-dominated army which is fighting an insurgency by rebels of the Hutu majority.

"In the second half of 1996, there were targeted attacks by large groups of assailants against communities of survivors resulting in high numbers of victims," the report said.

The need for protection was urgent with survivors giving testimony at Rwandan courts during trials of alleged killers.

Despite setback, U.S. still hopeful for Korean dialogue

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Washington remained upbeat even though North Korea once again has postponed a key briefing with South Korea and the United States on four-party peace talks for the Korean peninsula.

The United States was "disappointed at this latest turn of events," but the talks, which had been rescheduled for next Wednesday, "remain valid," U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said.

"We hope to move ahead with the joint briefing at the earliest opportunity," Mr. Burns said. The United States was informed Friday "by the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) U.N. mission in New York that the North Korean side would not depart Pyongyang in time to attend the joint briefing."

But "they have not informed us that they are unwilling to attend such a meeting," Mr. Burns said, adding that "we will be in touch with the North Koreans seeking further clarifications."

Likewise, South Korea expressed disappointment at North Korea's postponement of the key briefing.

"It is a disappointing news for us that the north again put off the briefing," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. "We hope that North Korea realises that the four-party talks would be beneficial to it and come to the table soon."

He said South Korea would wait for the north to change its attitude and continue pushing for the four-party talks but would not beg the north to come out to dialogue.

Meanwhile, top presidential foreign affairs and security advisor Ban Ki-moon reaffirmed South Korea's position that the north should not be rewarded for merely taking part in a briefing, Yonhap News Agency said.

The meeting originally was scheduled for Jan. 29. The New York briefing is intended to pave the way for North-South talks on a peace agreement to replace the uneasy truce that has governed the peninsula since the end of the 1950-53 Korean war.

President Bill Clinton and South Korea's President Kim Young-Sam proposed the inter-Korean peace talks last April, with Beijing and Washington intending to play a support role to the rival Koreas.

U.S. officials "are prepared to do anything to facilitate" North Korea's purchase of a grain-export deal between Minnesota-based Cargill grain company and North Korea, Mr. Burns said.

Last Month the Clinton administration announced it had licensed the American food conglomerate to sell up to 500,000 tonnes of grain to North Korea.

The license is an exception to the 47-year-old U.S. embargo on North Korea. Minnesota-based Cargill is the largest grain company and third-largest food company in the United States.

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Mr. Ban conveyed this position to Sandra Kristoff, senior advisor for Asian affairs of the U.S. National Security Council. She left here after a whistle-stop visit. North Korea had asked for a postponement of the preparatory meeting on a previous occasion, in order to conclude negotiations on grain purchases considered a top priority by Pyongyang.

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U.S. calls China talks constructive

WASHINGTON (R) — A U.S. delegation Friday wrapped up "constructive" talks in China but the State Department did not indicate whether Beijing had given any concessions on human rights.

"In general, we've been quite disappointed by Chinese actions over the past year" on human rights, spokesman Nicholas Burns told reporters. But "we've decided not to go into detail" about the just-concluded talks in Beijing, he added.

He said Washington placed more value on action than words anyway. The U.S. delegation, led by National Security Council Asia expert Sandra Kristoff, discussed a broad range of issues with the Chinese and the talks were "constructive," Mr. Burns said.

"Among the matters discussed were: the overall state of our relations, prospects for the coming year, activities and meetings for the coming year, high-level visits, human rights, law (enforcement) cooperation, the situation on the Korean peninsula and the situation in Hong Kong," he said.

U.S. officials have said one of the delegation's goals was to seek concrete gestures from Beijing on human rights that could be the basis for Washington dropping plans to sponsor in March a resolution at the U.N.

Human Rights Commission criticising China's human rights record.

In the past the resolution has been a source of great tension between the United States and China, which lobbied heavily and successfully against its passage.

Washington would prefer not to go forward with the resolution this year because the two countries have made progress in improving bilateral ties that had deteriorated seriously over human rights, Taiwan, arms sales, trade and other issues.

But the State Department's annual human rights report issued on Thursday could make it difficult not to proceed. In the report, the United States accused China of effectively silencing all public dissent against the Communist Party and government in 1996.

U.S. officials and human rights advocates have said they expect the United States to go forward with the resolution.

But new Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will visit Beijing on her first overseas trip being planned for mid-February, and this issue will be on her agenda.

Although she has said human rights will be a "key element" in U.S. foreign policy she has also asserted that U.S.-China ties cannot be held hostage to any one issue.

Karen rebels reject Burma's peace offer

RANGOON (R) — Rebel ethnic Karen guerrillas, who operate along the forested southeastern border with Thailand, said Saturday that they had rejected the latest peace overture from Burma's military government.

Leader of the rebel Karen National Union (KNU), General Bo Mya, told Reuters from Hteat Kaple at the southeastern border with Thailand that the offer was rejected, because Rangoon had insisted the KNU lay down its arms for talks to progress.

Earlier, a spokesman for Burma's ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) had told a monthly news conference that the government was awaiting the outcome of a new round of peace talks with the KNU.

ing with the KNU leaders to persuade them to make peace with the government. They had reached the KNU headquarters three days ago and the outcome of the talks was awaited, he added.

Guerrilla leader Bo Mya said the KNU was not prepared to lose its honour during the talks by laying down arms.

"SLORC has sent representatives to ask us to lay down arms to pave the way for talks," he said. "But we turned that down."

The KNU was formed in 1948 to fight for autonomy from Rangoon shortly after Burma gained independence from Britain.

The KNU is the only remaining armed group still fighting Burma's military government and several rounds of peace talks in the past have failed.

This week the KNU and its rival, the Democratic

Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), a splinter group backed by the Burmese government, have been engaged in heavy fighting that has left thousands of refugees Karens homeless.

Meanwhile, Burma's military government said Saturday it had uncovered a plot by exiled students to create unrest in the country whose capital was rocked by widespread street protests in December.

It also said that roads leading to opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's home in Rangoon would stay closed until it was clear there was no further threat to her personal security.

A spokesman for SLORC, Colonel Kyaw Thein, told a news conference the government last month uncovered a plot by the Thailand-based student's movement, the All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF), to create distur-

bances. The ABSDF, with financial backing from certain unidentified international organisations, had recruited Burmese operatives to undertake subversive activities using a video parlour and a photocopy shop as fronts, he said.

A total of 24 people linked to the alleged ABSDF plot had been arrested for trying to organise anti-Burma activities.

"The correspondence between them (ABSDF and local agents) revealed that the ABSDF insurgents had prescribed three forms of attack: Military combat, diplomatic propaganda and inciting of mass uprisings," the spokesman said.

An American woman living in Thailand was said by the government to have visited Rangoon and acted as the link between the ABSDF and its operatives.

Rwandan troops were responding to increasing insurgency in border areas with large-scale cordon-and-search operations, some resulting in big civilian casualties, the report said.

Earlier this week, the U.N. reported a marked increase in the number of killings of Hutu returnees, saying at least 60 were murdered in the past two months by survivors or soldiers.

World still dangerous, Cohen warns Americans

WASHINGTON (R) — New U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen said Friday his top priority will be to persuade Americans lulled by peace that the world is still dangerous.

"We still live in a very dangerous, disorderly world. And in many cases we face dangers that are comparable to those we faced in the past," he told reporters, citing the growth of terrorism, missile technology, and weapons of mass destruction.

A 'new Middle East', based on peace and security should be built, says David Levy

By Daphne Barak
Special to the Jordan Times



David Levy

DAVID LEVY, Israel's foreign minister and one of its veteran politicians, believes that "only through peace can Israelis and Arabs build a wall against threatening dangers" and that peace alone can help the region prosper and modernise. Following is an interview conducted with him at his home in Beit Sba'an.

Question: The peace process is not exactly fruitful at the moment...

Answer: It must be understood that in a process of this type there are two basic sides: a, the new government — it is no secret — has to face the Oslo agreements, which in its opinion is in digression to the Madrid process. Madrid was done with our agreement. The Oslo agreement was signed without the knowledge of the Knesset. In any case, when this government was elected, it took it upon itself, as a rule, that all commitments entered into by the previous government — must be kept; and b. how do you deal with Hamas, which is a threat to us? How can we uphold our commitment when, after all (after the withdrawal), we will be unable to act inside the Palestinian National Authority's domain and thwart terrorist activity? We also must consider that there could be a conflagration between us and the authority. If all details are not securely locked — there will always remain a spark of dissent.

This is actually the key to fully understanding the anomaly of this process; whenever there is an argument between us and the PNA — the entire Arab World — all that we have achieved until now is on the line. It gives us the feeling of being hostages. If there is a problem, we turn into prisoners.

Q: This surprises you?

A: It does not surprise me. When the previous government spoke about a "new Middle East", this seemed to me like wishful thinking. I also join in this wishful thinking, believe me, only the process is so paradoxical.

Q: You are the first Israeli minister in Netanyahu's government who met with Yasser Arafat. What was your impression of him as a person?

A: Look, when you go into a process that has already been set into motion, the only question that remains is about tomorrow. The pain is still there, the wounds are still open in many Israeli homes, but we must carve the way to the future. During the first moments of my meeting (with Arafat) the ambience was cool; during the conversation, which was very open, the atmosphere (and the conversa-

tion) improved. I must say that he made a great effort, had a very warm attitude; we touched on a lot of subjects. I am known as the type of person that puts things on the table. And he also did not try to evade problems. An effort was made to create trust.

Q: And was trust created?

A: A feeling was created, that it is possible to work together, yes. Remember, during the last eruptions of dissent, when he called on his people to go up to the Temple Mount? An explosive situation was created. On that Thursday night I called him. He was at meetings with his people, and I said: "Responsibility must be shown. I'm asking you to restrain those causing the problems; please, reveal to them what you said to me." And he told me then, very openly, about the distress he was going through. I knew then how much he appreciated my calling him. And he did as promised: there was a demonstration, but it was somehow restrained.

Q: Actually, it is said about you that you are the most moderate or maybe the most sane in the Netanyahu government.

A: I do not know. I do not like those nicknames. When Menachem Begin came to me during the Camp David agreements — I was then deputy prime minister — I stood by his side, at a time when Yitzhak Shamir and others were against him. So what was said about me then? "Moderate." So I am proud of that. During the government of George Bush, I reached an understanding with James Baker, his secretary of state, and we achieved the Madrid conference. In other words, I do not know what those names given to me are for. If a man reaches a certain position, he must create the best possible standpoints in regard to that particular situation. You must understand: in the Middle East, if

you are not strong, you will never get anywhere. Therefore, when a chance for peace is available and I work on behalf of it, I am called "moderate".

Q: By the way, except for the meaning your own party attaches to it, that is not an abusive term. It could even be the other way round.

A: It is true that my life here is more difficult. I must fight against my own associates about the need to catch the opportunity when it arises; for who knows, tomorrow it may be gone? And also I have to fight from within. In peace and in war, there is no neutrality. There is no such thing.

Q: Dennis Ross, the American mediator in the peace process, told me that lack of trust and faulty human relations are the actual problem "at the moment". The rest, according to him, can be considered small problems.

A: It is not a secret that neither the Palestinians nor the Arab World were happy with the elected government. It is also a fact that, even before the government managed to get organised, the Arab leaders had already met in Cairo. They had already given an ultimatum. And all this while the new government had announced that they would honour "the process". They did not want us. But even if the previous regime had continued, a worse situation might have occurred.

Q: What do you mean?

A: Because there are situations that any government must face. Knowing our Arabs well — and I actually grew up amongst them (born in Morocco), I can tell you that they respect the truth. It should never be proven that you have tricked them or lied to them. I criticise the previous government. I do not think it was necessary to reach the Oslo agreements through unofficial channels, like a James Bond mission. So that is why I

was elected: to find out the truth. See how different the agreement with Jordan is?

Q: Well, things do not look too cheerful these days.

A: Do not be impressed by a demonstration here or there or, in other words, you must face your partner with the truth. Do not say: "We will fix this later. An explosion in the peace process always depends on not telling the truth."

Q: And talking about Dennis Ross, is he — as Yasser Arafat's people claim — pro-Israeli?

A: I will tell you. I have experience in negotiating. It is an inseparable part of this business. How is it done? I have a contact man. I must have his loyalty. I doubt him afterwards and then he must prove that he is on my side. If you look it up in history, you will find so much gossip around negotiations.

Q: Dory Gold, who is in charge of Israel's foreign policy, he or you?

A: No, no. In a democratic state like Israel, the prime minister has the highest prerogative, which is good, while there is understanding, cooperation. Two months ago, that did not seem to be the case. I saw that it was impossible to continue that way. I stopped immediately. I announced my wish to resign from the government. I am happy that it was corrected. We — the prime minister and myself (Dory Gold is his assessor, side, I have no contact with him) — keep each other updated. Things are going well. I hope it will continue to be so.

Q: "Lebanon first" — are you part of it. Or it is just at gimmick?

A: That slogan was taken out of context. It is true that Israel has no peace problems with Lebanon. The problem is that there is no responsible party. Actually, the party is Syria. Syria is at home there. Therefore, it is a very complicated situation, very dangerous. And against this danger Israel acts in a very limited way. But not against the Syrians themselves. I do not know many countries that would act that way. And I am talking as a man of peace. On the other hand, we are not at liberty to act massively because if you strongly hit on small towns, on private citizens, you create a human tragedy. What is "Lebanon first?" We said: If Syria wants peace, and Lebanon's sovereignty is trampled, we will come out, but you (the Syrians) must also come out. Give Lebanon back its sovereignty. So the Syrians said "No." This is especially hurtful to me.

Q: What?

A: That the world did not accept "Lebanon first." What are the Syrians actually saying? They are bold-

ing the gun. The minute you tell them it is in the name of peace to unload the gun, they answer "Oh, no." That is the anomaly, it is a surrealistic situation.

Q: Another Netanyahu slogan — "peace for security" — is not really clear to me.

A: At the moment that peace is reached... And if you are not strong, you never reach peace. Lebanon, did it achieve something by being weak? I am optimistic. Peace will exist, and nothing will change that. Let us take a look back: if Israel were weak, would we be in a position to attain peace? Clearly no one in the Arab World hid their intentions to destroy us, to exterminate us.

Q: Henry Kissinger has lately suggested: "Why doesn't Israel give the Palestinians their own state and in exchange, they (the Palestinians) will revert to the 1967 borders?"

A: I know many theses and solutions. Believe me, solutions to the conflict cannot be found in any book or article. The problem is when you have to live in the heart of the conflict. For me, Israel, in the face of the dangers it has been through and also those that threaten it, must be suspicious. We would like to attain a peace that is not only written on paper, not only between leaders. That is the heart of the problem for which I am tolling my bells. I have said to every Arab leader that I have met: You cannot talk to me in one language, and to the people in a different one. They absorb Jihad.

To a certain way, do not say (like Arafat) I meant Jihad politically. And that is what Anwar Sadat did: spoke peace. By the way, Hosni Mubarak, although his nuances have changed lately, spoke peace. Peace must permeate the consciousness. There is a word in Arabic, "suluh" that means to make-up, to reconcile...

Q: With which Arab leader do you have a special chemistry?

A: With Mubarak. And I regret that because of problems with the Palestinians the tone has changed somewhat. We had (Mubarak and myself) open and honest conversations. We were left together (for) long conversations. He demonstrated a sharp, responsible, all-inclusive insight, but lately I am sorry that he is being placed into something that will surely pass. It will definitely pass, but there are certain things that Egypt's president has said. He and I, we spoke about everything.

In addition to him, King Hussein and his brother Prince Hassan.

Whom do I admire? Well, you must understand that I am in need of all of them.

Q: What about the Gulf countries?

A: I have met with the foreign ministers of Qatar and Oman. We had some good talks. Even though they were under pressure, they met with me publicly. It was even broadcast in some of their countries (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain). One of our foreign office representatives has visited Oman lately. But whenever there is a hitch in the negotiations (with the Palestinians) it stops. It is a problem.

Q: What is the problem?

A: It cannot be said. What about Iraq? Iran? Do you remember those worldwide discussions? Should they act against Saddam Hussein or not?

So I asked myself: Do they understand that we stand against all this on our own?

Q: There are some published rumours about "breakdowns" in the Netanyahu government. Functional problems?

A: Look, I will tell you: there was never any other attitude towards any new government. Look up newspaper articles referring to the beginning to Clinton. No, I will not say that everything is perfect... the atmosphere, the suspicion about the government, the new ministers. But even though there is a warm place in my heart for the late Menachem Begin, he is the one that came up with the term "breakdown in government." On the contrary, we are talking about a prime minister (Netanyahu) who did not go through the different stages that others went through, who did not grow within previous governments, who did not take care of manners, did not go through all the stages of a more mature man. This is a young prime minister, compared to his predecessors, with an American style, so there must be an acclimatisation period, also for the new ministers. And also state problems... Therefore, an atmosphere was created: "It's never been this way before." All these pressures placed on him cause him to express contradictions: "Maybe this or maybe that."

Q: And do you tell him all this?

A: Yes, I tell him. You know, if we succeed in attaining peace, all this will be...

Q: Have you, yourself, given up on your own ambition to be prime minister?

A: Yes, yes. I do not know if for every possible script, but I have fought. I have struggled. Look, for years I did not have it easy. When I reached the top, a coalition was created to block me. They thought then that anything goes. It makes no difference if you prove yourself, what counts is if you are one against the other. I am against quarrels, and then I became a realist.

Q: Realist, in other

words, giving up on the race for Israel's prime minister?

A: Yes. Look, I act for the peace process. In addition, I work to improve society. Just lately, I almost resigned because of what is happening in society.

Q: What about Ariel Sharon?

A: Yes?

Q: You almost resigned from the government because of the delays in naming him as a member of the cabinet.

"There is a certain sanctity in a human being. A Jew that kills an innocent Arab will end up killing Jews also, and vice versa. How to cope? It is forbidden to create illusions. If you believe in a certain policy, you must stand by it. You must not be seen as one who promises and does not keep that promise."

A: I had already left the Likud before the elections, but when we went to the elections, we did so together. We did it in order to recruit as many votes as possible for Bibi (Netanyahu).

In view of the very small percentage by which the elections were won, each one of us had a very large role in winning them. I will not take part in saying that someone did his part and let us put him aside. It is true that we quarrelled (with Sharon), had arguments, but then I asked Bibi "Tell me, don't you want him?" and Bibi answered: "No, no, I do want him." The matter just dragged on and on. You cannot accept that a central member be put aside and forced to talk to aides and more aides. I have never abandoned my friends.

Q: What are the relations between you and Sharon today?

A: Nothing special. On the one hand, socially it is OK, on the other, as you know, (there are) arguments about the political process.

Q: When you were a small boy, what did you dream of being?

A: Oh, no boy has only one dream. A boy usually wants to be like his father, and I am glad I absorbed from him some values: respect for your fellow man, patience to listen to the other side, helping the

needy, and not just in words. And, I wanted to go to Israel — and I got here. The road was very difficult, we crossed the borders illegally. I was 16 years old. We found our way to the Gibraltor, from there to an immigrant camp, and then to Beit Sha'an, a very small town where I live to this day even though it is an effort to travel daily to Jerusalem. But to return to my roots, the simple people, the folk, is my consolation.

Q: What is your dream?

A: My dream? When I first came to the country and found the terrible state of some people who were living below their class, I offered myself to the movement. And I had a dream: to reach the Knesset — and I got there. And then I dreamt of going into the government — and I got there. I then wanted to be prime minister — and I did not get there.

Q: Mr. Levy, how exactly do we fight fanaticism?

A: Look, I am a believer. I grew up in a religious home. All my children wear skull-caps, they are paratroopers in the military and they are not Arab haters. For us, the relation to a human being is at face value. If we see on TV a situation where an Arab mother or child are pushed, my daughter cries. There is a certain sanctity in a human being. A Jew that kills an innocent Arab will end up killing Jews also, and vice versa. How to cope? It is forbidden to create illusions. If you believe in a certain policy, you must stand by it. You must not be seen as one who promises and does not keep that promise. That could slowly bring to realisation...

Q: At Netanyahu's election meetings, were fanatics not inflamed?

A: I cannot say that everything done was to my taste. I complained more than once to the late Yitzhak Rabin that his pronouncements regarding the settlers would produce hate towards him and towards the process. And we are talking about a man who served Israel, a patriot.

I was the first in the political arena to say (after Rabin's assassination): That bullet was meant for the entire nation. Fanaticism is destruction.

Q: You have here a rare opportunity to speak directly to the Arabs, even those with whom you have no contacts. What do you wish to say to them?

A: I expect you to believe me when I say that only through peace can you and us build a wall against the threatening dangers at home. You must be the defender and the mouthpiece of peace, which must act as a lighthouse to those who look forward and not those who go back to the darkness of the Middle Ages and fanaticism.

And so she was, as one good man was laid to his eternal rest beside the shell-splintered grave-stone of his cleric father.

The Independent

Justice holds death in the wings

By Robert Fisk

THE LAST time we saw Moeen Osseiran, he was lying — pale but smiling — on his bed in the American University Hospital, exhausted after another blood transfusion for his leukaemia. He knew he was dying but insisted on living life, asking about events in southern Lebanon, Bosnia, Algeria, and — far more important to him — turning up at the high court to fulfil his role as a judge of the Lebanese Third Appeal Chamber.

We gave him some copies of L'Express, Le Point, Paris Match — his French was better than his English — and left him to what was his fifth and penultimate hospital visit before his final court

appearance and his death.

A small, rather gruff man with old-fashioned manners, Moeen lived for the courts. In a land where — in the words of one local academic — officials have in the past proved themselves "professors of corruption," he was incorruptible. At the height of the 1975-1990 civil war, he could be found walking across the front line, under shell fire, from his home in west Beirut to the court chambers in the east. He refused a government-offered Mercedes, preferring his old Peugeot. For years, he declined a bodyguard, only accepting one in the last weeks of his life — provided the soldier never carried a gun. He even refused the small

red badge on his registration plate that would have allowed him to overtake traffic jams and parking restrictions. "In the courts I am a judge, but in the street I am an ordinary man," he used to tell us.

Defendants and government alike found Moeen Osseiran a prickly character. When the cabinet expected a guilty verdict in the case of Yahya Chammas, an MP accused on drug-related charges, Moeen Osseiran ordered a retrial. When the Americans expected a conviction of two men accused of kidnapping the U.S. Ambassador Meloy in 1976 — found murdered three days later — he freed both of them on the grounds that they were covered by a post-civil

war amnesty, that they had not murdered the ambassador and that the real killer had died in a subsequent bomb explosion in Paris.

Moeen was a canny man who knew his politics. When the anti-Syrian Falangist militia leader Samir Geagea was put on trial for his life, charged with the brutal killing of his Christian rival Dany Chamoun, Moeen declined the court headship because his workload was "too heavy." Friends say he believed that however guilty Geagea proved to be, the case was political. But when we turned up for press passes to the Geagea trial and found ourselves stymied by unhelpful court bureaucrats, Moeen scrib-

bled a tiny note and the same functionaries, awed by his signature, gave us permission in less than 30 seconds.

In his last days, he was confronted by lawyers acting for a financial institution accused of fraud who knew that he was dying of leukaemia. Indeed, in one of his last appearances, Moeen could be seen, sitting in his red, white and black judge's robes, wiping away a nosebleed as his brain haemorrhaged.

But, as the lawyers tried to spin out their case, the judge increased the speed of the hearings. And a few days before he died, Moeen was able to declare the bank guilty. Maybe his father Mounir, a Shiite Muslim prelate,

had something to do with it. "I know I am going to die and my conscience is clear," the 62-year-old judge told his family in the two years after his leukaemia was discovered.

He refused to die in hospital — he had a phobia of being slotted into a refrigerated mortuary — so he finally died in a coma in his own bed in his faded, noisy, almost street-level apartment off Corniche Mazraa, a judge to the very end. His military bodyguard, still unarmed, came to pay its respects. President Elias Hrawi bestowed upon Moeen a posthumous Commander of the Order of the Cedar, a kind of Lebanese OBE.

The Osseirans, it should be added, are as tough as

they are principled. In Islamic tradition, the men accompany the dead to the cemetery while the women wait their ritual farewells from the balcony. But Moeen's eldest sister Amira — a black-cloaked lady in her eighties — hopped down the stairs after his coffin on the day of Moeen's final journey, jumped nimbly into the passenger seat of the hearse and refused to budge. "Let anyone dare stop me from accompanying my brother to his burial place," she shouted at the astonished mourners.

When the cortege arrived at the Zaatari mosque in Sidon — not far from Moeen's beloved orchards at the village of Sarafand — Amira and her younger sister Zeinab

agreed to follow the Muslim custom of allowing only the men into the mosque for the final prayers over the body. But at the family plot on a tiny peninsula above the Mediterranean, Amira and Zeinab refused to be kept from the grave. Sheikh Abdul-Amir Kabalan insisted that they should return to their car but Amira muttered: "Sheikh or no Sheikh, I'm going to be here."

And so she was, as one good man was laid to his eternal rest beside the shell-splintered grave-stone of his cleric father.

Arabs top world's food importers despite vast land

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab states account for more than half the world's net imports of farm products although they have enough arable land and less than five per cent of the global population, official figures have showed.

The 22-member Arab League imported an average \$18 billion worth of farm products annually over the past five years, 60 per cent of the world's net imports of \$30 billion, the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) said.

In contrast, their farm exports remained as low as \$5.5 billion per year, a

fraction of the worldwide food exports of \$525 billion.

The large gap between their farm imports and exports has cost Arab countries more than \$180 billion over the past 15 years.

Between 1990 and 1995, the cumulative Arab food deficit reached a staggering \$50 billion, the Abu Dhabi-based fund said in a study, quoting the official Arab Corporation for Agricultural Development.

The gap covered all farm products, with cereals accounting for nearly half despite efforts to increase

the area of such crops.

The report showed Saudi Arabia and its partners in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) remained the biggest food importers in the Arab World, accounting for nearly a half of the total farm purchases.

Experts said the GCC, which also groups Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), remained heavily reliant on imported agricultural products because of their arid desert land.

But the six members, which control nearly 45 per cent of the world's proven

oil reserves, have pumped billions of dollars into agricultural projects and subsidies to encourage farmers.

Although they have reported a sharp expansion in their cultivated areas, production still lags behind population growth.

The GCC nations have also been reluctant to invest in the farming sector in such fertile countries as Sudan, Iraq and Lebanon because of wars.

Lack of investment has remained one of the main reasons for the poor performance of the agricultural sector in the Arab World.

"The farming sector still

lacks interest by Arab investors as they prefer trade, services, industry and other economic activities," the AMF said.

It gave no figures for such investments but in previous years they did not exceed \$2 billion compared with the overall capital of more than \$100 billion invested annually by the Arab public and private sectors.

The lack of funds has combined with inadequate government farm policies, the absence of incentives for farmers and water shortages to keep the cultivated land as low as one

third of the total arable land of 198 million hectares (close to 500 million acres).

"Apart from the shortages in water resources, the Arab water sector is suffering from the poor performance of the institutions which manage water resources as well as lack of modern irrigation techniques," the report said.

Experts warned the Arab food gap could deteriorate in the coming years unless governments spur higher growth in the farming sector by expanding cultivated areas and increasing food exports.

They noted the agricultural sector, which accounted for 13 per cent of the Arab gross domestic product of \$528.7 billion in 1995, was growing by less than two per cent while the Arab population was rising by four per cent.

"Arab states have enough land to feed not only their people but other countries as well. Without efforts to utilise their land, their food gap will continue to widen," a Gulf-based farm expert warned.

This means they will depend more on imported food, which has serious implications on their security.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You'll have some really excellent ideas today for improving your lot in life, so make the best effort to pursue your dream. Dress ideally for enjoying new interests later this evening, and impress some influential people.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Before taking off today to see old close friends and making new ones, first try to improve the conditions at home. When you return, let your loved ones know that home is where your heart is and you wish to stay there.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Handle personal correspondence today and be careful about how you phrase things and thereby avoid any difficulties. Work on improving the home situation and inviting some friends in could help you to be successful.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Try to get most of your career activities out of the way early today, as you have an inspiration which will take up some time in the days ahead. Be kind to your mate later this evening and do something special for him or her.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Try to help a clever fellow associate today who has bitten off more than he or she can chew. The two of you later this evening, working together, can make great fellow associates and achieve a great deal of success.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Find a way today to make your activities more productive. Which will display your talents to those who are in a position to help you. Enjoy a relaxing hobby later this evening and thereby become prepared for another week.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Get into the details of a new project this afternoon which you hadn't noticed before. Ignoring these could lead to a difficult situation. Your mate will do something to please you, so respond to his or her gesture.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Labour on improving your credit today, which is not as well as you may have thought. Delay handling a personal difficulty later in the day and thereby make your career activities successful. Drive very cautiously.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get some advice today from a close friend who has had very diverse experiences. This person can help you greatly in your career activities. A new and profitable opportunity will arise which will become quite successful.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Try to build more accord with your loved one this morning. Some interesting people you encounter today can be of great help to your career activities. Do some reading later this evening and develop a good course of action.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) A fellow associate will be unusually willing to go along with your ideas today, however don't be suspicious with his or her intentions. Show your appreciation for this support, and you can get along better.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Take any health treatments today you may need. Don't let any physical difficulties pass by without attention, as they'll only reappear. You can have quite a good time later this evening with your loved ones.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx.

Annan warns poverty means instability

DAVOS, Switzerland (R) — Only greater and fairer economic development can secure international peace, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said Saturday.

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, he said the search for greater stability needed a broader definition of what international security meant.

"Lasting peace involves more than the intervention of blue helmets (U.N. troops). We cannot be secure amidst starvation," the former Ghanaian diplomat told the annual gathering, attended by political and business leaders from around the world.

"If the private sector does not deliver economic growth and economic opportunity — equitably and sustainably — around

the world, then peace will remain fragile and social justice a distant dream," he said.

Mr. Annan, who took over from Boutros Ghali in December, said that, while governmental aid by the rich to the poor nations remained vital, it was the private sector that had the biggest part to play.

The great ideological battles of the past had been resolved and market capitalism had won the day. But the challenge for the corporate sector was to show that it had been a worthy victor.

"Market capitalism has no major ideological rival. Its biggest threat is from within itself. If it cannot promote both prosperity and justice, it will not have succeeded," Mr. Annan said.

Calling for a new partnership between government,

international agencies and business, Mr. Annan said that the corporate sector must see that profit and development of the world's poorest nations could go hand-in-hand.

"Strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the private sector will be one of the priorities of my term," he said.

Mr. Annan, who was due to hold an exhausting round of meetings with government officials, including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, during the conference at this Swiss mountain resort, said that much had already been done by the private sector.

Private capital flows to developing countries had risen 35 times over the past quarter of a century to \$176

billion, while official development assistance had been decreasing.

But too much of the money was still being directed at only a handful of countries.

Some 100 countries were worse off than they were 15 years ago and the increasing disparities between rich and poor nations and between the haves and have-nots within countries remained a serious threat to stability.

The dramatic increase in world trade and the emergence of powerful new trading blocs has also served to add to the marginalisation of the world's poorest nations.

"The goal for the 21st century has to be the creation of a true global economy, genuinely open to all of the world's peoples," Mr. Annan said.

World Bank official estimates Gulf war cost at \$200 billion

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states lost nearly \$200 billion because of huge payments for the Gulf War, which resulted in massive damage in Kuwait, a World Bank expert has said in press comments.

"The Gulf War has cost Arab Gulf states nearly \$200 billion but they have managed to rationalise expenditure, cut budget deficits and repay most of their debts," said Bashir Zuhairi, banking and monetary expert at the bank.

Mr. Zuhairi, interviewed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) daily Al Itihad, gave no details, but Kuwait and Saudi Arabia alone paid more than \$65 billion to finance a U.S.-led multinational force that drove Iraqi invasion forces out of Kuwait in February 1991.

The invasion also resulted in the destruction of Kuwait's main facilities and the damage of its oil sector, which was rehabilitated after liberation.

Kuwait, one of the wealthiest

countries, was forced to slash its overseas assets of around \$100 billion to \$40 billion to finance the allied offensive and reconstruction after the seven-month Iraqi occupation.

Earlier figures by the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund estimated total damage from the Gulf war at more than \$600 billion. It included Iraq, whose civilian and military sectors sustained heavy damage in the conflict.

Mr. Zuhairi said the Gulf

Cooperation Council (GCC) states, which sit atop 45 per cent of the world's oil, needed to spend \$100 billion in five years on the development of their oilfields and the gas and refining industries.

New shipping companies are also needed for the expanding petrochemical sector in the GCC, which groups Saudi Arabia, the world's top crude producer and exporter, with Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and the UAE.

Mr. Zuhairi estimated that the GCC and the other members of the 22-states of the Arab League had nearly \$800 billion in investments abroad. They are concentrated in stocks and bonds, bank deposits and real estate.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6345	0.6252	0.7036	121.32	1.3468	1608.83	1.8358	5.3255
DE Mark	0.6118	1.0000	0.3822	0.8709	74.21	0.8237	983.99	1.1231	3.3842
GB Sterling	1.5994	2.8230	1.0000	2.2801	194.85	2.1541	2573.16	2.9362	6.8487
CH Franc	0.7025	1.1474	0.4387	1.0000	85.19	0.9455	1129.40	129.28	3.6838
JP Yen	0.0082	0.0134	0.0149	0.0129	1.0000	1.1097	13.26	15.26	4.5584
CA Dollar	0.7425	1.2189	0.4585	0.8066	1.11	1.0000	1194.55	1.3690	4.1130
IT Lira	0.0006	0.0013	0.0013	0.0013	132.02	0.6368	1.00	1.00	3.4367
NL Guilder	0.5447	0.8900	0.3403	0.7754	66.04	0.7334	876.03	1.00	3.0125
FR Franc	0.1808	0.2954	0.1130	0.2572	21.91	0.2434	33.18	33.1800	1.00

Energy		
Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	23.60	24.30
W. Texas	24.10	24.75
Bony	23.60	24.30
Dubai	28.94	29.75
UL Gas	214.00	214.00

Mid-East Currencies					
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4360	0.1687	0.3792	33.814
AE Dirham	0.2724	0.4454	0.1703	0.3849	33.666
KV Dinar	3.3102	5.4126	2.0894	4.7176	401.788
BF Dinar	0.3770	0.6365	0.2437	0.5729	51.958
CY Pound	2.027	3.3191	1.2668	2.8854	245.916

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz)	344.6	345.1
Silver (oz)	4.93	4.95
Platinum (oz)	348.75	349.75
AL (3 Months)	1627	1629
CU (3 Months)	2187	2192
Zinc (3 Months)	1172	1174
Lead (3 Months)	672	673
NI (3 Months)	7600	7640

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)					
Currency	1	3	6	12	Year
USD	5.46	5.37	5.50	5.62	5.75
GBP	6.12	6.19	6.56	6.50	6.50
JPY	0.53	0.53	0.46	0.59	0.99
DEM	3.00	3.00	2.88	2.94	3.00
FRF	3.09	3.24	3.26	3.24	3.26
CHF	1.37	1.50	1.58	1.68	1.62
ITL	7.42	7.26	6.93	6.80	6.88

Main Equity Indices						
Bourse	Index	Value	Change	% Change	High	Low
New York	DOW JONES	6813.09	-10.77	-0.18	6873.89	6808.08
New York	S&P 500	786.18	-1.99	-0.25	791.86	784.17
London	FT-SE 100	4275.8	-47.4	-1.12	4275.8	4242.9
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	18330.01	-465.97	-2.61	18610.2	17948.9
Paris	CAC 40	2516.56	-13.5	-0.54	2521.88	2488.2
Frankfurt	DAX	3035.15	-17.83	-0.59	3036.46	3019.67

Energy		
Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lb)	144.08	Spot
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1329	Spot
Sugar (\$/ton)	303.9	Spot
Wheat (\$/ton)	129	Spot
Soya (\$/lb)	22.28	Spot
Tea (\$/kg)	89.1	Spot
Barley (\$/bsh)	2.21	Spot
Rice (\$/ton)	470	Spot

JOD Cross Rates		
Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1313	1.137
DE Mark	0.4326	0.4348
CH Franc	0.4972	0.4997
FR Franc	0.1279	0.1285
JP Yen	0.5828	0.5857
NL Guilder	0.3852	0.3871
IT Lira	0.4394	0.4416

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- Te Kanawa solo
- Piece of a corolla
- Truck driver, at times
- Coin
- Source of hemp
- A Guthrie
- "The — Tales" (Chaucer)
- Catch
- Computer messages
- Hold back
- June 6, 1944
- Liverpool fuel
- Title in colonial India
- Baobab, e.g.
- Mimic
- Mineral lump
- Croissant
- European dormouse
- Liquid meas.
- vs. Madison
- hoo
- City on the Missouri
- Dorothy's dog
- Greasy spoons
- Moist
- Face
- At — and — sevens
- Kind of engine
- Tennis shots
- Reverberate
- Andrea —
- In — (bored by routine)
- Trudeau's comic strip
- Only
- Missed the mark
- Gen. Robert —
- "Hopalong Cassidy"
- Thickheaded
- Colored

DOWN

- Take in
- Hole enlarger
- Hereditary
- Get-up
- Golf word
- Dwindles
- Drawn tight
- Estate
- Nonprofessional
- Novel by Voltaire
- Author of "The Martian Chronicles"
- Director Kazan
- poly
- Rock group
- Zhivago's love
- Sacred
- Sweet wine
- Jostle
- Elton's john
- DDE's command
- Mandolin's kin
- "In — we trust"
- Friend: Fr.
- Actress Angela
- Harpo
- Univ. mil. gp.
- Stole
- Ranked
- Checked into
- Recalcitrant
- Evening affair
- Remained
- Touchdown, e.g.
- Ranked
- Mary's pet
- Cookie
- Orchestra member
- Change for a fin
- Netherlands commune

by Randall J. Hartman

S	T	D	P	M	D	M	S	P	O	L	A	R
K	A	M	I	G	O	I	N	E	V	A	D	E
I	B	A	R	C	O	N	E	O	A	K	E	N
M	O	N	A	W	K	R	I	V	E	R	E	N
P	O	A	C	H	V	A	N	I	S	H		
G	E	E	L	O	O	N	S					
A	I	R	H	E	A	O	T	A	D	P	O	L
B	R	I	E	D	B	E	S	E	N	O	R	
S	E	E	R	E	D	E	P	I	C	S		
C	O	R	D	O	N							
C	I	A		S	E	N	E	C	A	F	A	L
H	O	N	D	A		T	A	L	L			
A	W	A	I	T		A	T	O	M			
W	A	L	T	Z		P	H	D	S			

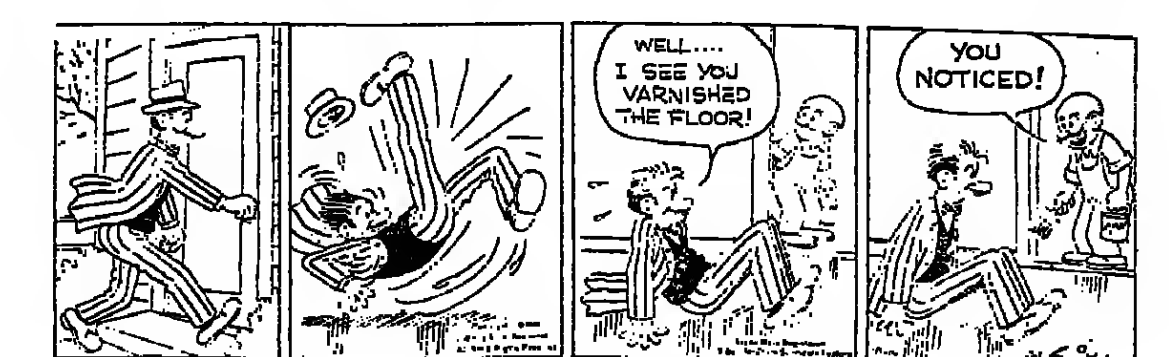
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



Business
Worldwide
computer

International firms study
of resourcing Hammam

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NEW YORK (R) — The New York Stock Exchange closed down 10.77 points, or 0.18 per cent, at 6,813.09 on Sunday.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 1.99 points, or 0.25 per cent, to 786.18.

The FT-SE 100 index in London dropped 47.4 points, or 1.12 per cent, to 4,275.8.

The Nikkei 225 index in Tokyo fell 465.97 points, or 2.61 per cent, to 18,330.01.

The CAC 40 index in Paris fell 13.5 points, or 0.54 per cent, to 2,516.56.

The DAX index in Frankfurt fell 17.83 points, or 0.59 per cent, to 3,035.15.

Worldwide spending on personal computers slowed in 1996

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The worldwide personal computer market slowed significantly in 1996 with the sharpest drop registered in the fourth quarter because of falling sales in Germany and problems at Apple Computers, two think tanks have said here.

A report by International Data Corp. (IDC) said deliveries of personal computers grew by only 11 per cent, or 20.4 million units, in the last three months of 1996 compared to the last quarter of 1995.

The growth in the global market over the year

slowed to 16 per cent, or 68.4 million units, from 25 per cent in 1995, IDC said.

Between 1991 and 1995, the market soared by 21 per cent annually.

Excluding Apple sales, however, market growth in 1996 was 20 per cent.

Apple deliveries fell by 22 per cent to 3.6 million units, IDC said. The Apple Computer model Macintosh lost one-third of its market share in the last quarter, falling to 4.5 per cent from 7.1 per cent in 1995.

A competing research institute, Dataquest, said

UAE in new drive to boost nationals in Asian-dominated bank sector

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has launched a new drive to boost the number of nationals working in the Asian-dominated banking sector over the next five years.

Quoted by local newspapers, minister of state for financial and industrial affairs, Ahmad Al Tayar, said nationals made up less than 10 per cent of the banking workforce despite previous attempts to raise their number.

"We are now targeting an increase of the national labour in the banking sector to between 50 and 60 per cent over the next five years," he said.

But bankers doubt such a level would be reached as many locals are reluctant to take up jobs in banks, preferring the public service with its numerous financial incentives and end-of-service benefits.

They said previous campaigns by the central bank had failed to produce results

despite the banks' willingness to recruit more locals.

"The central bank knows it is not our fault. We are ready to take more nationals and offer them attractive incentives," a UAE bank manager said.

"But most of them stay in the job only for a few months because they either want senior positions, start their own business or join a government job," he added.

More than 80 per cent of the nearly 12,400 employees in the UAE's commercial banks are from India, Pakistan and other Asian countries.

They are preferred because they have experience and accept relatively low salaries.

In previous circulars, the central bank has told the Gulf country's 19 national banks and 28 foreign units they must boost their national workforce to at least 15 per cent. But only a handful of them have complied and some units still have virtually no national employees.

Mr. Tayar was speaking at a meeting of a ministerial committee created in 1996 to oversee the "nationalisation" of bank jobs. It comprises the ministers of finance, labour and social affairs, and economy and commerce besides the central bank governor and other officials.

Mr. Tayar said the committee had drawn up a nationalisation plan following a series of meetings with bank

managers.

"The committee had made field visits to all banks operating in the country. It discussed ways to remove obstacles for increasing the number of national employees and listened to ideas from the banks," the minister said.

He gave no details of the five-year plan but bankers said it covered intensive training and more incentives for national employees.

Training would be provided by the banks and the Sharjah-based Emirates Institute for Financial and Banking Studies, the only centre in the UAE to specialise in the field. But authorities are considering introducing financial studies to the Emirates University and other institutes.

"Authorities should think that the banks also need incentives so they will be encouraged to employ more nationals. I think with an integrated plan, they can make progress but this needs time," a local banker said.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

International firms studying possibility of rescuing Hammamat Ma'in

** SEVEN INTERNATIONAL firms are currently studying the possibility of investing at Hammamat Ma'in spa the touristic project owned by the Jordan Tourism and Spa Complex, Mohammad Batayneh, the Jordan Investment Corporation has said.

The seven companies represent Arab and foreign investors studying the terms and technical framework of their investments.

The JIC has previously announced its intention to give away the project, which has been facing difficulties for the past few years, to the private sector to run it in accordance with specific terms and on bases laid down in cooperation with experts from the World Bank.

Mr. Batayneh expects more contacts in the near future from about 50 international firms which have expressed interest in this important project. He said despite generating operational profit that has reached JD500,000 last year, the company's final result was not viable as the depreciation costs during 1996 stood at JD800,000. On top of this, the company suffers from accumulated losses of previous years, Mr. Batayneh indicated.

The JIC chief said: "It has not been possible to restructure Hammamat Ma'in in the ways we wanted and considered to be convincing and, as such, we resorted to offer the project for the investment and management of companies specialised in the tourism sector." Mr. Batayneh indicated that the JIC intends to lease the whole of Hammamat Ma'in to any party that would meet the requirements and within a concession agreement to engage an international management and operate the complex against annual fees. He added that the winning party would have to bear the responsibility of developing and renovating the project.

According to Mr. Batayneh, the complex would require about JD3 million in renovation costs. Such a sum cannot be taken by the company in its current situation, he added noting that no real maintenance or modernisation has been done to the project for the past nine years.

Mr. Batayneh believes that engaging an international investor and management is the best and most viable to solve the trouble of the Jordan Tourism and Spa Complex (Al Dastour).

February shopping festival opens in Lebanon

BEIRUT (R) — Fifty per cent discount signs were hung across Lebanon on Saturday signalling the start of a one-month shopping festival aimed at boosting the country's image as a Middle East tourist centre.

Hotels, airlines, restaurants and shops announced a wide range of discounts to run throughout February after the government began a promotional campaign two months ago.

"The idea is to attract as many tourists as possible and to reveal the civilised face of Lebanon and to highlight the return of stability to the country," Economy Minister Yassin Jaber was quoted as saying in Lebanon's national news agency.

Tourism flourished in Lebanon before the 1975-1990 civil war, contributing 20 per cent of the country's earnings.

The February "shopping month in Lebanon" is mainly

expected to attract Gulf Arabs who flocked to Lebanon in pre-war days to enjoy its cool mountains and hot nightlife.

Lebanon's national air carrier Middle East Airlines reduced by up to 50 per cent fares on most of its incoming flights.

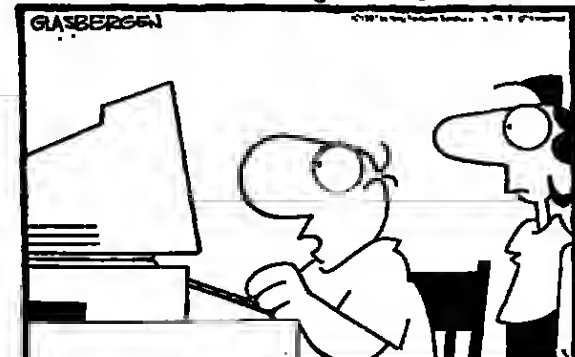
Director of sales at the Marriott Hotel, Marinette Dorkhom, said the festival was an encouraging initiative.

The five-star hotel, which opened last May, is offering the 50 per cent discount on its \$260, \$240 and \$380 rooms. The country's other major hotels are also cutting rates by half.

"Most people are coming from the Gulf. Some Europeans who had booked for meetings in other months rescheduled for February," she said.

Discounts offered by shops in Beirut's thoroughfares like Hamra, Mar Elias, Fum Al Shoubbak and Zaika range between 30 per cent and 50 per cent.

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argison

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

IMCAG

THONC

YORPTS

HARTOU

Answer: C O U N T Y TO N C H O P T S U R

Yesterday's Jumble: BOUGH TWILL ELEVEN SICKEN Answer: When he was late for dinner she was STEWING

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Graf, Hingis advance to 'dream' final

TOKYO (R) — World No.1 Steffi Graf and her teenage challenger Martina Hingis took different paths but won their semifinal matches on Saturday in the Pan Pacific indoor women's open to set up a dream showdown between them.

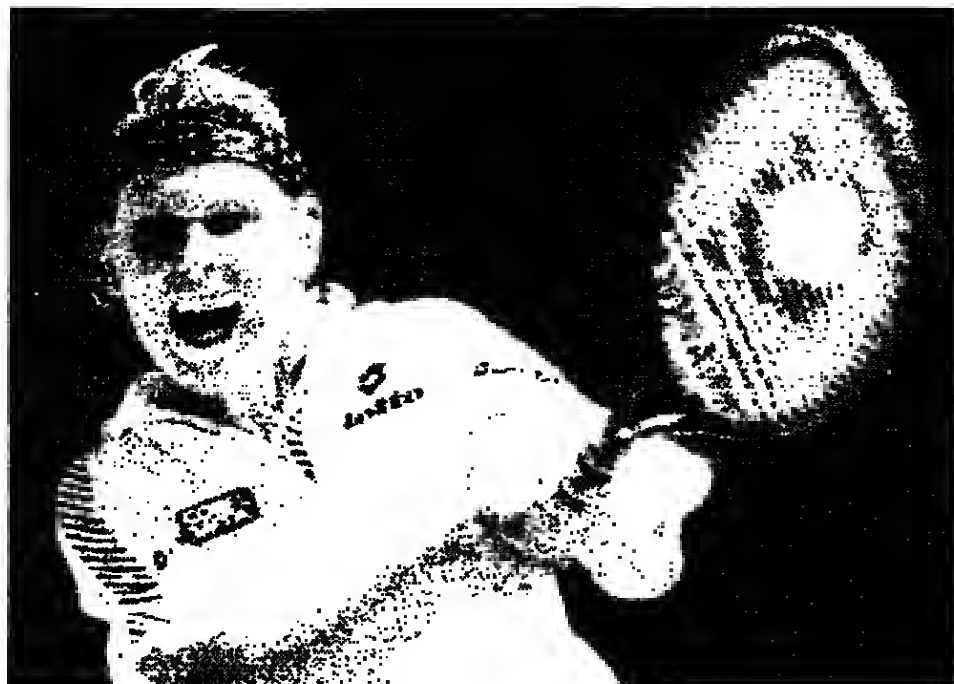
In what was likely to be a highlight of the 1997 tennis year, Hingis, 16, and Graf, 26, slug it out on carpet-like artificial turf on Sunday to determine who is the new "queen" of the women's game.

Switzerland's Hingis reached the final first with a hard-fought 6-1 5-7 6-2 victory over Germany's Anke Huber, while Graf had an easier time beating Brenda Schultz-McCarthy of the Netherlands 6-1 7-5.

Graf, throwing off the effects of a horror week before her arrival in Japan eight days ago, had the look of a champion determined not to lose her crown in beating the Dutch player.

Top seed Graf, who last week was knocked out of the Australian Open in the fourth round and then saw her father convicted of tax evasion, has not needed more than an hour in each of her three matches to reach the final.

Hingis, the second seed in both world rankings and this tournament behind



Anke Huber

Graf, had an equally easy time until she lost her concentration in the second set against Huber.

The match records of Hingis and Graf sum up the decade that separates them in age.

In Friday's quarterfinal, Hingis won her 100th professional matches while Graf goes into Sunday showdown seeking her 103rd major title.

But momentum is on the

side of Hingis.

A losing semifinalist in the tournament here last year, Hingis bids on Sunday for her third singles title only five weeks into this year's Women's Tennis Association Tour.

She won the Sydney International three weeks ago and last week became the youngest winner of an open title when she took the Australian Open.

On Friday, Graf said age

was the main difference between her and Hingis, both of them hard-hitting baseline players who wear their opponents down.

"Obviously 10 years makes a big difference. You're young, there's more excitement, you've got nothing to lose," Graf said.

"Ten years later, you're a different person. You're not as naive or as open-minded as you were 10 years ago."

Pacers silence Olajuwon and trounce Rockets

INDIANAPOLIS (R) — Reggie Miller scored 17 of his 33 points in the first quarter as the Indiana Pacers contained Hakeem Olajuwon and thumped the undermanned Houston Rockets, 100-74 on Friday.

Dale Davis added 17 points for the Pacers.

"We needed this victory and we've needed it all year," said Miller, who was 12-for-20 from the field. "It was a very big team effort. The main focus was to turn around the season and win tonight. We must play like this all the time."

Olajuwon, who had 24 field for 48 points in Thursday's 113-109 loss to Denver, was held scoreless for the game's first 18:54 and finished with only six points and three rebounds in 31 minutes.

Sam Mack led Houston with 15 points.

In Boston, Rick Fox tied a career-high with 33 points, including a go-ahead three-pointer with 56 seconds left, as the Boston Celtics overcame a 23-point deficit to defeat the Portland Trail Blazers, 111-105.

Todd Day and David Wesley each added 20 points for the Celtics, who snapped a seven-game losing streak.

Gary Trent had 24 points and Clifford Robinson 21 for the Trail Blazers, who lost their third

straight game.

In Charlotte, Glen Rice continued his torrid scoring, exploding for 10 of his 43 points in a game-breaking 16-3 run, as the Charlotte Hornets defeated the Milwaukee Bucks, 102-95.

Anthony Mason finished with 13 points, 11 rebounds and nine assists for the Hornets, who won for the eighth time in their last 11 games.

Ray Allen scored 22 points and Vin Baker and Glenn Robinson added 18 apiece for Milwaukee.

At Golden State, Scottie Pippen scored 23 of his 32 points in the first half as the Chicago Bulls built a 37-point lead and cruised to a 115-92 victory over the Golden State Warriors.

Pippen had 10 points in the first quarter, helping Chicago build a 35-8 lead over the Warriors.

Michael Jordan and Toni Kukoc each had 18 points for Chicago.

In Philadelphia, Penny Hardaway scored 27 points as the Orlando Magic topped the struggling Philadelphia 76ers, 109-99, for their sixth win in seven games.

Horace Grant added 16 points and Tony Seikaly had 13 for Orlando. Hardaway has scored 109 points over the last four games for the Magic, who have won nine of their last 11 games.

Rookie Allan Iverson scored 26 points.

In San Antonio, Chris Carr's jumper with less than a second left lifted the Minnesota Timberwolves to a 97-95 victory over the San Antonio Spurs.

San Antonio's Sean Elliott hit a three-pointer from the right side to tie the game, 95-95, with 36 seconds left, setting the stage for Carr's heroics.

"We just keep on winning," Carr said. "We just have to go out there and get a little more respect."

Kevin Garnett scored 30 points and Tom Gugliotta added 22 for Minnesota.

In Seattle, Gary Payton scored 19 points and Detlef Schrempf added five of his 18 in the final 70 seconds as the Seattle Supersonics beat the Washington Bullets, 97-95.

Shawn Kemp had 13 points and 10 rebounds and Payton handed out seven assists for Seattle, which improved to 18-5 at home and won for the 16th time in 20 games.

Chris Webber scored 20 points and pulled down 10 rebounds for Washington, which has not won at Seattle in 17 years.

In Vancouver, Steve Smith scored 10 of his 24 points in the fourth quarter to lead five starters in double figures as the Atlanta Hawks beat the Vancouver Grizzlies 87-76 victory.

Mookie Blaylock had 21 points and Christian Laettner had 15.

Ski chief reassures minor nations

SESTRIERE, Italy (R) — The also-rans and no-hopers of Alpine skiing can rest easy.

Their dreams of springing an upset — or at least a top 20 finish — in major events such as the world championships or winter Olympics remain alive.

Gianfranco Kasper, the general secretary of the International Ski Federation (FIS), said on Friday that attempts by the sport's old powers — notably Austria — to get more skiers into the events would not succeed.

"I don't think the format will be changed," The Swiss said in an interview before skiers from 58 nations gather for the two-week long 1997 world championships which start here on Sunday.

Under current FIS rules, each nation competing at major events such as world championships or Olympics is entitled to only four starters in each of the five events. The defending world champion also qualifies automatically.

That ruling effectively puts the mighty Austrians on a numerical level with Belgium or Lebanon — providing they meet the minimum requirements by being world ranked.

Austria, which has at least nine top class world cup athletes in each of the disciplines, wants to change the system to ensure that all those skiers ranked in the top 20 or 30 in the world get a chance to race the big events.

"We have been having talks with the FIS about this matter for quite some time now and slowly but surely we appear to be coming to



Italian soldiers make finishing touches near the finish area of the slalom piste of the Alpine Skiing World Championships. The two-week long championships get underway in the Italian resort with athletes from some 58 nations (Reuters photo)

an agreement," Austrian Ski Federation race director Hans Pum told Reuters in Kitzbuehel last week.

Austrians have long put all their energies into qualification for their team and are often accused of looking tired in the races themselves. Automatic selection by world ranking would take away the pressure.

"Of course there are some obvious problems where international interest is concerned if nine out of 40 starters are austrians," said Pum.

On the other hand it is outrageous to have a higher standard at a world cup race than at a big event.

Kasper disagreed entirely. "We will always have to have a restriction on the numbers," he said.

He said the subject came up every time major nations had to select their teams and Alpine skiing already allowed more competitors per nation in Olympics than any other sport.

Asked if change would come, he replied: "No". "It has been requested at FIS congress several times that the top 15 be automatically qualified. Politically it never goes through. Even the big nations are not all in favour."

None want to give their rivals an advantage. All the small nations would be opposed because under the existing system they have a chance of getting in the top 20 and thereby attracting sponsorship and investment.

Players bet against themselves in Spanish pools win

MADRID (R) — Sporting Gijon players have walked into a storm of criticism after winning nine and a half million Pesetas (\$68,350) by betting that they would lose or draw last Sunday's Derby game with Oviedo. The match ended 0-0.

The 27 players are to give up doing the pools, but are unlikely to face disciplinary action from club authorities or the Spanish Soccer Federation. The game was played after 13 of the other 14 fixtures on the pools coupon had finished.

"The bet was decided by dice," said sporting forward Francisco Luna.

The players have also pointed out that they lost 500,000 Pesetas (\$3,600) each in bonuses by not beating Oviedo.

But they would have started the game knowing that they already stood a good chance of winning a sizeable sum, though not how much it was likely to be.

In the state-owned soccer pools, known as the "Quiniela", participants must guess whether the 11 First Division games and four Second Division fixtures chosen at random will finish in a home win, draw or away win.

The Spanish Federation has no rules preventing players from doing the pools.

Fernando Garrido, head of press at the Federation, on Friday described the episode as "a curiosity, an anecdote."

He said: "We certainly don't imagine that this was done deliberately. The Federation is not considering changing its rules."

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Jordan hints at NBA return

OAKLAND (AFP) — Michael Jordan anticipates he will return to the National Basketball Association next season, but the legend who makes \$30 million for this season has made no guarantees. "At the moment, I look forward to playing next year," Jordan said. "I don't see anything that says I won't or I will change my mind." Of course, there was little warning when Jordan quit the Chicago Bulls on the eve of the first practice of the 1993-1994 season. But now Jordan is planning to win a fifth NBA crown in seven years and seek another in 1998. "Nobody can put a time frame, or a time limit, on something you love," Jordan said. "Right now I love the game. I hope to fulfill all those expectations of winning a championship and go right into next year." Jordan is on pace for a record ninth NBA scoring crown while the Bulls are 39-5 and on pace to surpass their record 72-10 mark of last season.

Olympic champion in injury scare

LAAX, Switzerland (AFP) — Warwara Zelenskaja of Russia won only her second World Cup race in a women's downhill here on Saturday as Olympic champion Katja Seizinger escaped unhurt after a dramatic fall. Zelenskaja timed 1min 24.98sec for the 2,603 metre course to beat Switzerland's Heidi Zurbriggen and Austria's Renate Goetschl, who finished nine hundredths of a second behind in a tie for second place. Zelenskaja, fourth in last Saturday's downhill at Cortina D'Ampezo in Italy, scored her maiden win at Narvik, Norway, in 1996.

Perec to miss indoor championships

PARIS (R) — France's double Olympic sprint champion Marie-Jose Perec will not compete at the World Indoor Championships in Paris from March 7-9. "Marie-Jose will not do indoors this season. That's a final decision," Perec's manager Jukka Harkonen said. Harkonen told the French sports daily L'Equipe, the Olympic 200 and 400 metres champion had not started training until the middle of this month and was concentrating on the summer season.

Ivanisevic opponent pulls out

ZAGREB (R) — German Alex Radulescu was forced to quit his Croatian indoor quarter-final against titleholder Goran Ivanisevic on Friday because of a back injury. World No. 2 Ivanisevic had swept through the first set without dropping a game and the score stood at 1-1 in the second when Radulescu retired. Ivanisevic will meet fifth-seeded Spaniard Javier Sanchez, a 6-0 7-6 winner over Argentine Gaston Etis, in the semifinals. Second seed Thomas Enqvist of Sweden reached the last four by beating Moroccan Hicham Arazi 6-2 6-3. He will play Briton Greg Rusedski of Britain, a 7-5 6-3 winner over Martin Damm of the Czech Republic.

Unbridled's Song retired

HALLANDALE, Florida (R) — Unbridled's Song, the 1996 Florida Derby winner who went down to defeat as the favourite in the Kentucky Derby, suffered a broken cannon bone in his right front leg Friday and was retired. Trainer Nick Zito announced that the four-year-old colt broke his leg during a morning gallop at Gulfstream Park in Florida under regular rider Mike Smith. "He seemed slightly off this week, but X-rays at first did not disclose anything," Zito said.

GOVERN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNIA HIRSH

ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AKS 72 CAQJ92 AKJ54

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10 Pass 12 Pass

What do you bid now?

A - The two obvious choices are one no trump and two clubs. Since the attractive features of your hand are that you are two-suited and have full opening-bid values, why not give partner the good news. Bid two clubs. A change of suit by opener is more forward-going than a one-no-trump rebid.

Q.2 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

AKJ73 OAS CAQJ92 AKS

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10 Pass 10 Pass

What do you bid now?

A - In support of spades your hand is worth 20 points. Even if partner has a dead-minimum of six, you have enough for game. The way to bring these happy tidings to partner is to jump to four spades — three spades would be invitational and might get passed.

Q.3 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AKJ3 KQJ10782 9 453

Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one club. What do you bid now?

A - Had your opponent not opened the bidding, you would have preempted with three hearts. The fact that East did indicate the auction should make no difference. Jump to three hearts, to crowd the bidding.

Q.4 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AKS 72 CAQJ92 AKJ54

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

10 Pass 12 Pass

What do you bid now?

A - We know there is a temptation to bid three no trump and hope that partner has a spade stopper. However, we feel that you can better describe your minimum opening bid by rebidding four diamonds. Of course, a pass is out of the question.

Q.5 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

AKS 74 CA107 043 AKS5

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

10 Pass 10 Pass

What do you bid now?

A - An awkward hand. You would like to raise clubs, perhaps with a jump, but that might bypass the only makeable contract of three no trump. Since three spades would greatly overstate the quality of your suit and is not forcing in the modern style, you will have to improvise with a rebid of two hearts.

Q.6 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AK1043 05 K74 AQ853

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

10 Pass 10 Pass

What action do you take?

A - There is nothing you can do with any degree of safety, especially since a bid of two spades would be forcing. Negative doubles might choose that action, but it is rather risky with a singleton in partner's suit. Pass.

Q.7 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AKS 74 CA107 043 AKS5

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

10 Pass 10 Pass

What action do you take?

A - There is nothing you can do with any degree of safety, especially since a bid of two spades would be forcing. Negative doubles might choose that action, but it is rather risky with a singleton in partner's suit. Pass.

Arab Centre For Heart and Special Surgery

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ARABIC FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

The Language Centre at the University of Jordan announces that the Intensive Course in Modern Standard Arabic for Speakers of Other Languages will commence on February 1, 1997 and will last for 16 weeks.

Those interested please call at the Language Centre for registration or further information. The deadline for registration is Wednesday, February 5.

<p>TODAY AT</p> <p>CINEMA TEL:634144</p> <p>PHILADELPHIA "1"</p> <p>Eddie Murphy & Angela Bassett.... in VAMPIRE IN BROOKLYN</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>CINEMA TEL:634144</p> <p>PHILADELPHIA "2"</p> <p>Michael Douglas & Annette Benning... in THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>CINEMA TEL:699238</p> <p>PLAZA</p> <p>Sylvester Stallone...in JUDGE DREDD</p> <p>Shows: 12:00, 2:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>CINEMA TEL:677420</p> <p>CONCORD</p> <p>CONCORD "1"</p> <p>Robert De Niro....in THE FAN</p> <p>Shows: 12:15, 2:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30</p> <p>CONCORD "2"</p> <p>Coming Soon... "Custom made Citizen"</p> <p>The satirical play starring Mousa Hijazin</p>	<p>Nabil & Hisham's Theatre</p> <p>TEL: 625155</p> <p>The theatre opens on the Ramadan Holiday with the new play entitled Aman.. Ya Ho</p>
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Amman, Jordan (R) — The Jordanian national basketball team met the Lebanese national team in a friendly match on Saturday night at the Amman Sports Hall. The Jordanians won the match 78-72. The game was a high-scoring affair with both teams displaying strong offensive and defensive play. Jordan's star player, Michael Jordan, was not present in this match as he is currently in the United States. The Lebanese team, led by their star player, Hisham Ali, put up a strong fight but ultimately fell short. The match was a testament to the skill and athleticism of both teams.

Imperial Call has t

Amman, Jordan (R) — The Imperial Call has been a significant event in the Jordanian sports calendar. It has brought together athletes from various countries to compete in a series of events. The event has been well-received by the local population and has provided a platform for athletes to showcase their talents. The Imperial Call has also been a source of inspiration for young athletes in Jordan, showing them that they can compete at the highest level. The event has been a success in many ways and has provided a valuable experience for all involved.

Get c

Amman, Jordan (R) — The city of Amman is a vibrant and bustling metropolis. It is a city of contrasts, with modern skyscrapers and traditional architecture coexisting side-by-side. The city is known for its rich history and culture, and it is a popular destination for tourists from around the world. The city is also a hub for business and industry, and it is a source of pride for its residents. The city of Amman is a place where the past meets the present, and it is a city that is always evolving.

SU

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GS

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juwon kets

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Mookie Blaylock had 21 points and Christian Laettner had 15.

TS IN BRIEF

s at NBA return

Michael Jordan announced he will return to the Chicago Bulls after a season in the NBA.

"At the moment, I don't see anything that will change my mind," he said. "I will return to the Bulls in the summer of 1998. Nobody can put a limit on something you love. I just love the game. I hope I will be winning a championship one day. It is out there for a reason. The Bulls are 60-8 and on pace to surpass a mark of last season."

champion in injury scare

World Cup champion Norway's Ole Gunnar Solskjaer was injured in a friendly match against Sweden.

Solskjaer, who scored the winning goal for Norway in the 1994 World Cup, was injured in the 70th minute of the match.

iss indoor championships

The 1997 ISS Indoor Championships will be held in the United States.

The event will feature a variety of indoor sports, including basketball, volleyball, and soccer.

opponent pulls out

German MMA fighter Radoslaw made a last-minute withdrawal from a fight.

The fight was scheduled for last night, but Radoslaw was unable to make it.

's Song retired

Florida's "The Song" has been retired.

The song was a popular hit in the state and was played at many events.

Nabil & Hisham's Theatre

The theatre opens on the Ramadan Holiday with the new play entitled Aman.. Ya Ho

Jordan's national soccer team meets Lebanese counterpart today

By Mun'em Fakhoury in Beirut and Aileen Bannayan in Amman

THE KINGDOM'S national soccer team play their first official match against their Lebanese counterpart Sunday as both teams prepare for their upcoming World Cup qualifiers which start in April.

The encounter will be a good opportunity for Jordanian head coach Mobammad Awad to test the readiness of his players who have had a three-week training camp in Amman as part of their preparations for the Asian Group 3 qualifiers which start in Manama, Bahrain against the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

The Lebanese team, meanwhile, will be facing Kuwait and Singapore in Group 7.

Today's encounter is not an easy one for the Kingdom's team as their opponents have four professional players on the team including star striker Vartan Ghazarian, voted Lebanon's top player a few months ago, and Wael Nuzha. The team also includes Papken Malikian, Tro Kehyayan and Jamal Taha.

While the match will be the first friendly for the Jordanian team, Lebanon have already had eight, scoring impressive results by winning three, losing two and drawing in three.

In their latest match they scored a 2-0 win over Estonia. They also beat Oman 2-1, Georgia 4-3 and 3-1. They lost to Bahrain 3-2 and Oman 2-1 and drew 1-1 with New Zealand, 0-0 with Iran and 2-2 with Algeria.

Jordan had last played the Lebanese team in 1993 losing 1-0 in Beirut and winning 4-1 in Irbid.

The Lebanese team will play in Amman Feb. 7 before the Kingdom's team travels to Baghdad for an extensive training camp March 9-28 where they will also play three matches.

Other friendlies scheduled by the

Jordan Soccer Federation include two against Syria, March 16 in Amman and March 23 in Damascus, while the matches against the Oman team will be held in Muscat March 8, and 11.

Thirty-six Asian countries will contest the first round World Cup qualifiers and have been divided into ten groups.

The top team in each of the 10 groups will qualify for the second round where the teams will be divided into two groups.

The first two from each group will then contest the Asian finals.

The first three qualify directly for the 1998 World Cup in France while the winner of a play-off between the fourth team and the Oceania Zone winner will also qualify.

The Kingdom's team includes Ahmad Abu Nasouh, Mu'taz Rishah, Mobammad Abu Daoud, Yousef Ammouri, Amjad Taher, Mohammad Khaz'ali, Isam Mahmoud, Abdullah Abu Zame'b, Faisal Ibrahim, Hussein Sbanineh, Abdallah Shihyiah, Ra'fat Ali, Adnan Awad, Raed Momani, Bassam Al Khatib, Aref Hussein, Khaled Yousef, Munir Abu Hantash, Nart Yada and Walid Abdul Rahman.

Seven of Al Faisali's players, currently on leave to take part in the Arab Champion Cup in Morocco next month, will join the national team's match in Beirut. They are Ahmad Khalil, Mohammad Mahadin, Jamal Abu Abed, Subhi Suleiman, Ja'far Hamad, Hasounah Sheikh and Jiryes Tador. Head coach Mobammad Awad said the seven might join the team starting with the matches in Oman.

Al Faisali will join Arab Cup champs Morocco's Olympic Khreibkeh, Arab Clubs champions Egypt's Al Ahil and runner-up Morocco's Al Raja.

Imperial Call has tough challenge in Hennessy

DUBLIN (R) — Ireland's Cheltenham Gold Cup hero, Imperial Call, heads a star-studded field for Sunday's grade one Hennessy Gold Cup at Leopardstown.

Imperial Call (5-4 favourite) faces seven rivals, three trained in Britain, including 1993

Cheltenham Gold Cup winner, Jodami, in the three mile (4.8-km) contest.

Jodami, winner of three successive Hennessy Gold Cups starting in 1993, was denied the chance to bid for a four-timer by an 11th hour setback 12 months ago. He is 11-2 in the betting for

Sunday.

The Grey Monk, trained by Gordon Richards, heads the British challenge at 7-2 while Belmont King, also from England, is quoted at 10-1. British-trained horses have "won the race" eight times in its 10-year history.

FA in fury over UEFA World Cup decision

LONDON (AFP) — A furious row between the English Football Association and UEFA has erupted this weekend after the sport's European ruling body announced it was backing Germany to host the 2006 World Cup.

UEFA also added that it firmly believed there should only be one bid from Europe to host the finals.

The UEFA decision has angered FA officials who seven months ago confirmed that England would be bidding to host the Cup.

FA officials are angry at what they see as an attempt to derail England's bid.

First news that UEFA was officially backing Germany came in a fax from the ruling body to the FA on Friday.

"It made no reference as to when or where this decision had been taken. At this stage there is no evidence that it was ever recorded publicly," said FA spokesman David Davies.

"UEFA has informed us that the committee had also informed its belief that there should only be one candidate from each continental confederation when bids were submitted to stage the tournament."

"The final decision as to who stages the World Cup of 2006 is scheduled to be taken in June of the year 2000 by FIFA, football's world governing body. It is not a decision for UEFA," Davies added.

"We have no alternative today though but to see the communications from the UEFA executive as evidence of an attempt at a very early stage to prevent England's bid from receiving proper consideration. The attempt will not succeed," he added.

FA chief executive Graham Kelly insisted that

they had no intention of dropping out of the running, especially after the success of Euro 96, which proved that England has the organisation both on and off the field.

"It is the next logical step for us," said Kelly. "Nobody can question any longer our ability to stage the biggest sporting events in the world." He has already won the backing of the current government and Labour have promised to support the FA too if they win the forthcoming general election.

Kelly said the FA would be seeking political support as a matter of urgency over the next few days.

Discussions with UEFA had gone on late into last night, but officials had not been able to make the organisation alter its earlier decision.

Kelly added: "We have been in touch with FIFA. They have confirmed that bidding has not officially been opened yet. We made it plain that we find it completely inexplicable."

Kelly stressed the FA was not going to war with Germany, even though the German Federation president Egidius Braun is a vice-president and acting treasurer on the UEFA executive committee.

"Our quibble is not with the Germans," he insisted. "They have every entitlement to put forward their case and I am sure it will be a strong one. Our astonishment is at UEFA's decision."

He added: "We have been in touch with FIFA and they have confirmed that the bidding process has not even opened yet."

"It is not a dispute between England and Germany. We will both have strong bids to put forward and we would want their bid and our bid to be considered fairly and openly in the democ-

cratic way these things should be considered. "We don't relish a situation of this sort but we cannot sit back and allow this to happen to English football."

"We have a duty to the whole of the English game to make sure that our case is properly heard. If we were to lose a fair and honest debate we would accept that just as we would accept a defeat on the football field."

The Euro row over who should stage the 2006 World Cup has already spilled over into the political arena as Labour leader Tony Blair and shadow Heritage secretary Jack Cunningham pledged to "redouble" Labour's support for England's bid.

Dr. Cunningham condemned UEFA for trying to hijack European support for Germany. "I am astonished by the deplorable behaviour of UEFA," he said.

"Their attempt to hijack European support for Germany, in connection with bids to host the 2006 World Cup, must be strenuously contested. "A Labour government will insist on an open process in which bids to host the 2006 World Cup must be judged on merit."

Labour revealed it even plans to set up its own taskforce to back England's bid.

Dr. Cunningham added: "On Thursday evening, Tony Blair and I met the chairman and chief executive of the FA, as well as England coach Glenn Hoddle, to pledge our emphatic support for the FA's bid to host the World Cup in 2006."

"We will redouble our efforts in support of the FA following this news. A Labour government will establish a taskforce to support the FA's bid to bring the World Cup to England in 2006."

Bills quarterback Kelly announces retirement

BUFFALO (R) — Quarterback Jim Kelly, who led the Buffalo Bills to an unprecedented four consecutive Super Bowl appearances in the 1990s and lost each time, announced his retirement on Friday.

"I had to make one of the most difficult decisions of my life," a tearful Kelly said at a news conference at the Ralph Wilsoo fieldhouse. "I've been playing football for 28 years. Many of my dreams have been fulfilled and my goals achieved."

claim that Kelly has been given a \$1 million buyout to retire.

The 36-year-old Kelly, one of the NFL's most prolific passers, is coming off perhaps the worst season of his career.

He battled injuries and completed 59 percent of his passes for 2,810 yards with a career-high 19 interceptions. Kelly threw just 14 touchdown passes in 13 games and split time with emerging backup Todd Collins.

Kelly's retirement comes

after the hiring of Dan Henning as new offensive coordinator. Henning has said he will call the plays, which could have clashed with Kelly's ability to direct the no-huddle offense.

In 11 NFL seasons, Kelly completed 60 percent of his passes for 35,467 yards and 237 touchdowns. He threw 83 touchdown passes in two seasons with the Houston Oilers and the Houston Oilers.

Kelly's retirement comes

play my entire NFL career with the same team and play with some hall of famers." Kelly said. "It's now time to devote more time to my wife and family. It's been a great ride. It's not the end of an era. My life is just beginning."

In the four Super Bowl losses, Kelly often faltered. He threw for 829 yards, but had just two touchdown passes and seven interceptions.

"There's been good times and bad times, but the good times outweigh the bad

times 10 times over," Kelly added.

The Bills finished 10-6 last season and made the playoffs for the eighth time in nine seasons. But they suffered a 30-27 loss to the Jacksonville Jaguars in the AFC wild-card round, their first playoff setback in nine games at rich stadium.

Kelly's final play for Buffalo will go down as a fourth-quarter fumble that led to the winning Jacksonville field goal. Kelly suffered a concussion on the play.

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